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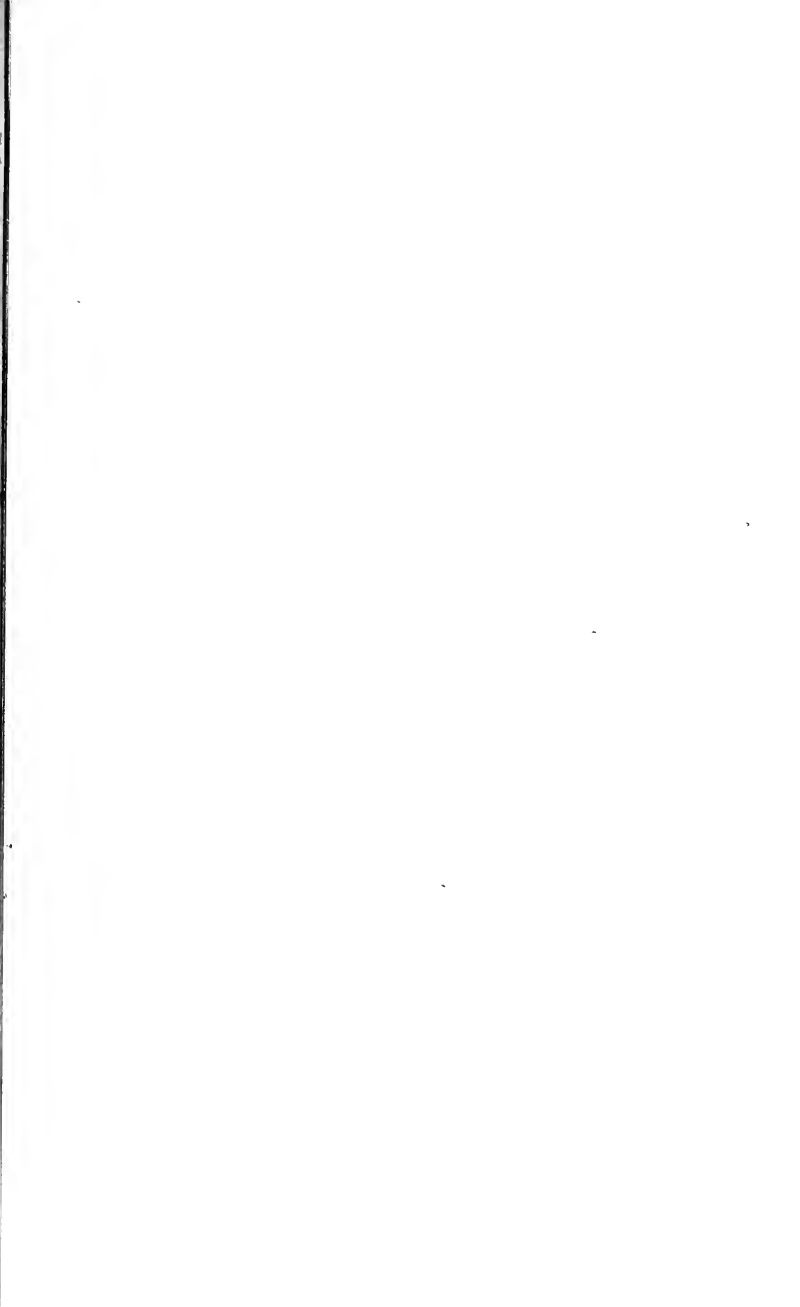
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M. NEWKIRK,

"Superintendent of Female Sabbath-school  
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JANUARY 9, 1854.







# NOTES ON THE GOSPELS,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY;

INCORPORATING WITH THE NOTES, ON A NEW PLAN,  
THE MOST APPROVED HARMONY OF THE  
FOUR GOSPELS.

BY

MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY AT ALLEGHENY CITY, PA.

JOHN.

NEW YORK:  
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,  
No. 530 BROADWAY.

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1857.

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Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1856, by

MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS,

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## PREFACE.

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THE Author once entertained a thought of including the Notes on John and the Acts in one volume; but it was soon found to be impracticable.

The ancients gave to this Evangelist the symbol of *the Eagle*. He is so lofty in doctrine, and so rich in the discourses of our Lord, while his narrative is so additional to the foregoing, that John, of all the four, could best claim a volume of exposition.

As there is less that is historical, and more that is theological in this Evangelist, the comments will be found to be more full than the former. They are the result of exegetical studies for the class-room, divested of critical details. It is hoped that in this form they may be found to bring within the comprehension of all classes, somewhat of the richness and fullness of this beloved Evangelist, and may aid many to enter into his spirit of love.

As one of "*the pillars*," (Galat. 2: 9,) and one of the *three* whom our Lord admitted to His most sacred and special familiarity, (Matt. 26: 37,) and to whom alone He gave *new names*—the last of the Evangelical witnesses, and the last of the Inspire! writers—John has been furnished by the Holy Spirit with thoughts and words which take peculiar hold upon the heart of Christ's loving church. His is the closing testimony, worthy of the deepest study. And if the church is to become more loving, and more spiritually one, how shall this end be better promoted than by the earnest study of this "Apostle of completion," who is also the "Apostle of love?" For—as has well been suggested by another from this Evangelist—while God has His perfect attributes, such as "being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth"—"GOD IS LOVE." In Him love is not so much an attribute, as it is *God Himself*: and it is the perfect combination of all these attributes that resolves them into Love, as the harmonious whole, just as it is the perfect combination of all the prismatic colors in the sun-ray that makes LIGHT which is "the TRUE LIGHT."

As this Gospel narrative was called for to meet a more advanced necessity of the church, so the study of it will be found to be a more advanced exercise, and will follow very properly upon that of the foregoing Evangelists. It will of course be quite necessary, in order to a full understanding of the Life of our Blessed Lord, to examine all that the beloved disciple has given us fresh

from His bosom: and in these three volumes a facility is furnished for the study of this *fourfold testimony*, as it is harmonized and arranged in a consistent whole.

The Illustrations which are introduced are mainly such as have been verified by the Author's personal observations in the Holy Land. Notices of localities and customs, from the same source, are also interspersed.

Parallel passages of Scripture have been not only referred to extensively in the Notes, but *cited* in the very words as often as possible.

The literature of this Gospel has been greatly enriched of late: and has been carefully applied, during the last few years, to this volume.

Besides the works of Lampe, Tittman, and Lücke, which are so well known, Professor Tholuck has issued a Sixth Edition of his Commentary, quite rewritten. It is now in course of translation by the Rev. C. P. Kranth, of Pittsburgh.

Of the recent helps, "Alford's Commentary" on the Greek text, (Vols. I. and II. issued)—Webster and Wilkinson's New Testament, (Vol. I. just issued)—and "Plain Commentary on the Gospels," are valuable expositions from the Church of England.

Brown's "Discourses and Sayings of our Lord"—Stier's "Words of Jesus"—Quésnel on the Gospels, (Boardman's Edition)—Olshausen's Commentary, and Meyer's and Hutcheson's, with Bengel and Calvin, are but a few of the prominent authorities at hand, on this portion of Scripture.—Francis Trench on "The Life and Character of John," is highly interesting.

While the effort of modern skepticism is to throw obscurity around the origin of our religion, and especially to impugn the genuineness of this Gospel narrative, it carries even if possible a peculiar authority, as a history made up of our *Lord's own words*, and as thus remarkably bearing on its very face the title—"The Word of God."

The study of its contents, with an understanding of its relation to the other Evangelists, will show it to be a *new* Gospel narrative, and yet not "*another Gospel*"—a crowning exhibition of the Person and Work of our Lord, out of the richest experience of His love, and with patriarchal feet already stepping into the New Jerusalem—the aged Apostle seeming already to get a vision of the Lamb, and to hear the anthems of the redeemed; and bearing a testimony, the substance of which is, "WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."

## SYNOPSIS OF JOHN'S LIFE.

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1. John, son of Zebedee, and a disciple of John the Baptist, "*one of the two*" first followers of Christ. . . . JOHN 1: 37-40
2. His call to be a personal attendant of Christ. . . . MATT. 4: 21-22.
3. He attends Jesus as a special witness of His miracles. MARK 1: 20-29.
4. His call to the Apostleship, and his new name. . . . MARK 3: 17.
5. He is a witness of the raising of Jairus' daughter to life. . . . . LUKE 8: 49-56.
6. He is an eye-witness of Christ's majesty at the Transfiguration. . . . . MATT. 17: 1-9.
7. He complains to Jesus of one, not a disciple, working miracles. . . . . MARK 9: 38.
8. He and his brother propose to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans. . . . . LUKE 9: 51-56.
9. He and his brother apply for promotion in Christ's Kingdom. . . . . MATT. 20: 17-28.
10. He asks Christ privately about future events. . . . MARK 13: 3-5.
11. He is sent with Peter to Jerusalem, from Bethany, to prepare the Passover. . . . . LUKE 22: 8.
12. John as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." . . . . JOHN 13: 23.
13. John at the Agony in the garden. . . . . MATT. 26: 36-46.
14. John at the trial, as known to the High Priest: and gaining admittance for Peter. . . . . JOHN 18: 15.
15. John alone of the Twelve at the Cross, and charged with the care of our Lord's Mother. . . . . JOHN 25: 25-27.
16. John with Peter at the Sepulchre—and the first of the twelve to believe in the Resurrection. . . . . JOHN 20: 1-10.
17. John one of the seven at the Sea of Galilee after the Resurrection. . . . . JOHN 21: 20-24.  
(He follows after Peter, perhaps to show his readiness to go also to death for Jesus—perhaps to enjoy His presence as long as possible, fearing that He might suddenly disappear.)

18. John, after Pentecost, works the first Miracle (with Peter) at the Temple gate. . . . . ACTS 3: 4: 1-52.  
 Preached Christ to the people. . . . . ACTS 4: 1.  
 Was persecuted and put in custody, (with Peter,) as one of the first sufferers for the Risen Christ. . . ACTS 4: 3.
19. He is thrust into the common prison, and miraculously delivered. . . . . ACTS 5: 18.  
 Teaches and preaches Christ from house to house, with Peter. . . . . ACTS 5: 47.
20. Remains with the rest of the Apostles at Jerusalem, in the persecution there at Stephen's death. . . . ACTS 8: 1.
21. He is sent down thence to Samaria, with Peter, to bear Apostolic witness to the extension of the Gospel to the Samaritans. He returns to Jerusalem. . . . ACTS 8: 14.
22. John in the Apostolic Synod at Jerusalem. . . . ACTS 15.  
 Gives to Paul and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship," as himself a "*pillar*" in the church. . . . GALAT. 2: 9
23. John residing at Jerusalem; having charge of our Lord's Mother. . . . . JOHN 19: 27.
24. John's final departure from Jerusalem—probably at the breaking out of the Roman war, or at Paul's death, or Mary's. . . . . MARK 13: 14-18
25. John in Asia Minor, at Ephesus, &c.—writes his Gospel history and Epistles.
26. John at Patmos. . . . . REV. 1: 9  
 Writes the Apocalypse.  
 Returns to Ephesus, A. D. 96.  
 He dies a natural death, A. D. 100—102.



# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE

### GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

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#### THE AUTHOR.

The Scriptures say little about the early life of the New Testament characters, excepting of John the Baptist, as Christ's forerunner, and of Paul, the converted foe of Christianity. All attention is left to centre upon Christ himself. As to all others, their official life in this Divine service is shown to be the main concern, in comparison with which their former life was of little or no importance.

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James. He was probably the younger of the two—as it is yet the custom in the East to speak of the elder son as the son of the father, and to speak of the others as his brothers. Hence it is, "James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother." He was probably born in Bethsaida, as were Peter, Andrew and Philip. Ch. 1: 44. Salome is honored with having two sons Apostles, and we may infer hence the influence of her piety in her household. We know from the Scripture that she became a constant and devoted attendant of Christ, and ministered to him of her substance. We infer that the family was in comfortable circumstances. Zebedee, it appears, had "hired servants," and pursued, with his sons, the trade of a fisherman, having his boats and nets. (Mark 1: 20. Matt. 4: 21.) This business was profitable on the sea of Galilee. We observe, also, that John had a house, *τα ἰδια*, (probably in Jerusalem,) to which he took our Lord's mother after the crucifixion.

It is said of Peter and John that they were *αγραμματοι και ιδιωται*, (Acts 4: 13,) not—"unlearned and ignorant men," but that they were untaught in the schools of the Rabbis, and that they were private men,—not "rulers" or magistrates. In the same sense it was inquired about Christ: "How knoweth this man *letters*, having never learned?" (John 7: 15.) The reference was to Rabbinical learning that was thought necessary, especially for public teachers. John was an Apostle, an Evangelist and a Prophet. He wrote besides this Gospel narrative, three Epistles, and the Apocalypse. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, and, as he was a partner of Andrew in the fishing trade, so he was doubtless the companion of "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother," to whom Christ was first pointed out by His forerunner, as "the Lamb of God." We observe his modesty in not giving his name, though he was among the first to whom Christ was introduced. As he first heard of Christ as "the Lamb," so we find him speaking of Christ, under this name, some *twenty-six times* in the Revelation. Accordingly, he also mentions the very hour of the day made so memorable to him by this discovery of Christ. Ch. 1: 36, 39, 40.

John and his brother James were called by our Lord, *Boanerges*—"sons of thunder"—referring probably to qualities which they had for their work, and  
(vii)

also to qualities which should be given to them for their work. So John, though generally regarded as mild and effeminate, perhaps, from being known as the beloved disciple, was pungent and terrific in his rebukes, as we see in his Epistles. He uses some of the hardest terms, and calls the hardest names, "liar, Antichrist," &c. Neander calls him "the man of burning love and burning hate." It was, however, the same disposition showing itself in opposite directions. Our Lord himself displayed the same severity towards hypocritical Pharisees, while he was tender and forgiving toward publicans and sinners. A new name was sometimes given to mark some covenant relation, (as Abraham and Sarah) or to signalize the entrance upon Christ's special work, as Cephas. This name, "Boanerges," may have been so perverted in their minds as to lead them to talk of calling down fire on the Samaritans, ELIAS-LIKE. It is remarkable that *Peter and John*, though so different in character, were so intimate. We find them going timidly together to the Judgment Hall, and running eagerly together to the sepulchre, and together going up to the Temple after the Ascension. (Acts 3.) These two, with James, were the *chosen three* whom our Lord admitted to be the honored witnesses of His most extraordinary works, and His special attendants to the last. But though Peter was inclined to legal views, John was the Apostle of love. Yet their different tendencies and shades of thought, did not hinder their cordial, familiar friendship. We may learn a lesson from this—Grotius remarks, that Peter was more a friend of "*Christ*," and John of "*Jesus*"—that is, the former revered and loved Christ in his official character as the Messiah more, and the other more in his person, as his bosom friend. Peter's love was more active and practical. John's more passive and receptive. Peter boasted more of showing his love. John boasted more of *being loved*. Both were necessary among the twelve. Peter was the planter, John the waterer. We observe that a similar miracle of fishes was wrought by our Lord, at the beginning and close of his intercourse with Peter and John, to illustrate the success of the *Gospel net*, under their preaching. (Ch. 21, 5, &c.)

John was specially prepared to treat of Christ as the glorious *Word*, by the Transfiguration scene, where the chosen three had special, *personal* assurances, derived from a *personal* view of their glorified Redeemer. They were chosen to be "*eye-witnesses* of his majesty," so as to give a very particular testimony of Christ's Divinity and work. John, however, was to stand alone at the Crucifixion—braving the danger there and confessing the Saviour amongst bloody murderers. And hence, he needed to have it to say, "We beheld his glory," &c. as Peter says, (2 Peter 1: 16,) "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty"—both referring to the same event. For this last trying scene and service, John was prepared by the Transfiguration scene, as was Peter for his special testimony to Christ's glory. James, the other one of the three, was called to be the first martyr of the twelve, while John was called, through exile and much tribulation, to survive them all. It was a very distinguished honor of John, to have intercourse with Christ from the cross, and to be charged by the dying Saviour with the care of his widowed mother.

Lampe distinguishes three *calls* of John—

1. His call to the discipleship, remaining yet in his business. (Chap. 1: 37-40.)

2. His call to be an attendant on Christ in his ministry. (Matt. 4: 21, 22.)

3. His call to the Apostleship, when he was surnamed with James "Boanerges." (Mark, 3: 17.)

Hengstenberg suggests, that John's designating himself as "*the disciple whom Jesus loved*," was, perhaps, an explanation of his own name, ("*favor, or grace of God*,") so that his name was a prophecy of the relation which he

entered into to Jesus. But, we suppose, that it was rather out of humble and earnest gratitude that he takes this designation to himself, while it is also for a modest withholding of his name, in the narrative.

So the sisters at Bethany speak of their brother Lazarus: "Lord, *behold he whom thou lovest is sick.*" When we can profess nothing of our own love as Peter did, and fell, we can profess *Christ's love*, as John did—or our own love as Peter afterwards did, but not as more than that of others.

### TIME.

It is not easy to determine the exact date of this Gospel narrative. It would seem that it must have been later than the other three Gospel Histories; its contents suppose a more advanced state of the Church, and of controversy. It is not mentioned by the earliest writers of the Apostolic age, as Papias, Polycarp, Barnabas or Ignatius. But neither does Papias mention *Luke's Gospel*. And this of John is universally recognized by the later writers, showing that it was not promulgated and received till late in the Apostolic age. It is now more commonly referred to the period 70–85 or 90; which would be subsequent to all the other New Testament writers, but prior to John's Epistles and Apocalypse.

The writings of Hippolytus, lately discovered, show that it was acknowledged as in use, and as received in the Churches as early as A. D. 117. The Ottobonian manuscripts lately found, quote it as early as A. D. 120. So that the late skeptical theory which has labored to make out a later date for this Gospel narrative—even as late as the middle of the second century—is positively disproved, without the need of exposing the folly of those assumptions upon which this theory was built.

### PLACE.

Irenæus, the most ancient testimony, gives Ephesus as the place from which this Gospel was published. The manner in which the localities and customs of Palestine are spoken of, indicate that it was written at a place remote from the Holy Land. At Ephesus, his Epistles were probably written. There he long resided: and if the terms used in the introduction of the Gospel (ch. 1,) imply anything about the *place* of writing, we may suppose that it was likely to have been Ephesus—a place in such intercourse with Alexandria, which was the seat of those erroneous philosophies, that are supposed to be more or less aimed at, or provided for, here. When this narrative was written, many more Gentiles of more distant parts had been converted to Christianity than at the date of the former Gospels, and it had become necessary to explain to the Christian Church, many things which needed no explanation when the members were mostly from about Judea, and when the Jewish polity was still in existence. The feasts and other Jewish peculiarities would be little understood by the Greeks of Asia, a score of years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

### OBJECT.

The Evangelists Matthew and Mark have given us the official life of our Lord, more according to the substance of what was first commonly preached. Luke has aimed to give a more complete and orderly account, "having examined everything from the beginning." These were chiefly historical. John has had a still different object—to meet the wants of Christians at a more advanced stage, and to give them such further doctrinal views as would solve the questions that had arisen, or would arise in the Church, and confirm the faith of Christians against oppositions of science, falsely so called. In so doing, he would also furnish additional matter, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, filling and supplying what would be for the fuller edification of the Church in the Gospel narrative.

He falls in with the other Evangelists in a few passages only, (ch. 6: 1-21 and 12: 1,) except in the records of the Passion and Resurrection.

Against the denial of Christ's Divinity, Incarnation and Pre-existence he is most explicit, furnishing facts, and the claims and arguments of our Lord. Against the notions of the Logos that prevailed in the writings of Philo and Plato in distinction from the doctrine of Christ as the true Logos or Word, he is most full. He opens his Gospel History with terms used in a peculiar sense, yet without explanation, showing that they must have been in use already, and that these terms were applied by him to his object in a way that would be commonly understood. The term "Logos," especially as applied by him to the Person of our Lord, is not so used by the other New Testament writers. It was familiar to the Alexandrian Jews who had already sown the seeds of that heresy, which, in the middle of the second century, came to be established and known as Gnosticism. Already Paul warns Timothy against the false knowledge, and refers to it in other Epistles, as it was aiming to unite Christianity with their philosophy. (1 Cor. 8: 1; Col. 2: 8, 18; Ephes. 3: 19.) They believed in certain Æons or Emanations, from the Supreme God, among which was the Logos, with others.

Between Philo's notion of the Logos, and the opinions which the Jews of Palestine entertained of the Messiah, there was a strong similitude. Many of the attributes which Christ possessed, these Alexandrian Jews were accustomed to ascribe to the Logos. John, therefore, in order to correct their false notions and to more aptly set forth the true doctrine of Christ to these, and all to whom he wrote, employed this very term, and transferred it to Christ.

This term *Word*, or a kindred term *Reason*, is found also in the Indian, Persian, Egyptian and Chinese systems. And we may remark the Providence of God which had allowed this idea of the Logos to become so universally familiarized, especially during the four hundred years prior to Christ's coming—for by this means, and under this character of Wisdom and the Word of God, John was enabled to illustrate and unfold the doctrine of Christ as he could not otherwise have done it. (See Notes, ch. 1.)

The Evangelist proceeds to show the true Logos as so infinitely superior to their view—as God Himself—who becomes Incarnate, and was of course pre-existent, and was even already existing at the beginning of all things.

In all this view of the immediate relations of this Gospel narrative to those times and necessities of the Church, we are not to forget that the Holy Spirit had reference also to all after ages, and to the tendency in all periods of the Church's History to deny the Divinity of our Lord. The Divine origin of the Sacred Scriptures is seen in the fact that no great error in doctrine or practice arises out of the heart of man, but it meets a barrier reared already in the Word of God, "by Him who knoweth what is in man."

The main conflict in the Church, at first, was with those Jewish notions of the Mosaic law, which were inconsistent with the Gospel method of Justification by faith. The other Evangelist accordingly, some thirty years before this, had given the Gospel narrative in its relations to the Mosaic economy. Paul also, in his Epistles, had fully met the questions between the Law and the Gospel as a ground of Justification. But now, other questions had also to be met. Here the conflict turned upon the Person of Christ, and a proper view of this great truth lies at the very foundation of true Christianity. This, therefore, John undertakes to set forth in his Gospel, his Epistles and the Apocalypse. Already in the time of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, (see Epistle to the Colossians,) this question had arisen. Hence, we find Paul and John using language very similar, and aimed at the same great point.

And ever since their day it has been seen that essential questions in religion have turned upon this—as to what view is taken of the person of Christ—His

Incarnation—His actual life upon Earth as God-man—His two natures in one person forever. The Apostle contends against those errors which early broke out, and which have ever since arisen in various shapes. He teaches the Essential Divinity and Godhead of Christ—His pre-existence and His real humanity also as the man Christ Jesus. His part of the Apostolic work was therefore the building up and perfecting of the saints in the true knowledge of Christ; and who more fitted for this work than he who leaned on the Master's bosom?

John states his object in ch. 20: 31—to lead to faith in the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus, and thereby to the possession of eternal life.

The divisions of this Gospel as given by Lücke, are, 1st. The Preface or Summary. (Ch. 1: 1-18.)

PART I. The official work of our Lord in Galilee, Samaria and Judea—His reception and rejection—His glorification by John the Baptist's testimony—by that of others—by His miracles and by His conflict with the Jews. (Ch. 1: 18, to 12: 50.)

PART II. His special glorification in His last supper, and the Discourses of that period, which are so fully related, and His public glorification by His sufferings, death and resurrection. (Ch. 13: 1, to the end.)

And this great idea of our Lord's glorious work is set forth as according to the Father's purpose and the Son's pleasure—and to accomplish the great end of giving Light and Life to mankind through this only Mediator and Intercessor, who also sends the Comforter to take His place in the Church, when He departs to carry out this work in Heaven. (Chs. 16 and 17.)

In all this it is shown that "the public work of Christ manifested His glory, but at the same time led on to His death, which death again manifested His glory." Gradually it appears that His glory is to be shown forth as the result of the opposition of His enemies, (ch. 12: 28,) until the Father's testimony forms the transition point from Part I to Part II.

It is argued that he could not have seen the other Evangelical narratives, as an examination of the contents will show that where he gives the same accounts, he has altogether the style of an independent witness, as in the account of John the Baptist (ch. 1,)—the miraculous feeding (ch. 6,)—and the history from ch. 12. The connexion between the language of the Gospel and of the Epistles ought to be noted, as ch. 1: 1, and 1 John 1: 1.

That he could not have aimed at making a supplement to the other Gospel narratives would appear from his going over the same ground in part, (ch. 6: 1-14; ch. 18: 19,) and from his nowhere intimating this.

The Ancients termed this "*the spiritual gospel*." Ernesti calls it "*the heart of Christ*."

"The Spirit took a historical picture out of the Lord's whole life and work from His birth to His ascension, and so showed it to the Evangelists, that in their mutually supplementary records, the glory of the only begotten Son shines forth to us, full and unimpaired."—*Steir*.

"In the fine quartette of the four gospel witnesses, John gives the *bass* of a full harmony." Chrysostom says that John, though rising higher than any of the other Evangelists in the statement of Christ's divine nature, descends lower than any other in describing His bodily affections.

#### AUTHORSHIP.

Up to the 18th century, this Gospel had been universally acknowledged, except by one insignificant sect, the Alogi. It was then attacked by certain English Deists, and by a few German writers, but with poor success. Strauss, more recently, has assailed it, chiefly because, as he admits, "*he could not otherwise escape from believing the miracles of Christ*." Irenæus, who conversed with

Polycarp, the friend and disciple of John himself, quotes this Gospel as the work of John, and as already well known and received in the Christian church.

Some moderns would attempt to trace it to the Gnostics in the latter part of the second century, and some threescore years after John's death. But there is no proof of this, and every proof against it. And, as Lücke has shown, there are clear traces of its being quoted and received by the churches before it was adopted by the Gnostics. Irenæus used it, at any rate and recognized it at the same time with the Valentinians. And if it had been first promulgated by the Gnostics, it would not have been received into the Canon by the Christians, as they were violently opposed to those errorists.

It is shown in the few fragments of Celsus's book entitled "the true Logos" which Origen has preserved in his treatise "Contra Celsum," that this early infidel writer was acquainted with this Gospel narrative. Why then, when he battled Christianity to the uttermost, did not Celsus deny that John was the author of this Gospel, especially when he lived so near the time of John, (140) and must have known the facts, and would have denied this if he could? There is also evidence that Valentinus, the Gnostic, early in the second century, borrowed some of his expressions from this Gospel, while he acknowledged John to be the author. (See Tholuck on John.)

### APOSTOLIC LIFE OF JOHN.

This Apostle, who was styled by the early Greek writers, "the leaner on the bosom"—or, as we would say, "the bosom friend," of our Lord, was, as we have seen, the last of the twelve in His company before His death. The last time we meet him after the Ascension, we see him, true to his intimacy with the Master, making him known to Peter—"It is the Lord." (Ch. 21: 7.) In the second year of Christ's Public Ministry he had been chosen from among the chosen disciples to be an Apostle. And out of these twelve thus specially chosen he was also one of the three *most elect*, who were admitted to company with our Lord on the most extraordinary occasions.

Paul, who was called to the Apostleship about ten years later than John, died some 30 to 35 years earlier than he. John and Paul are most eminently the *Theologians* of the Apostles, though John has received that title. These two have furnished us with the most complete systems of doctrine. Peter has been styled the Apostle of Hope—Paul, the Apostle of Faith—John, the Apostle of Love.

We observe that John had not been moved by the defection of Peter, which he alone witnessed at the trial of our Lord, but had remained firm, (John 19: 26,) and had cleaved to the Master alone, of the twelve, to the last.

While Peter and Paul were more addicted to planting, John, like Apollos, was given to watering. And thus it was reserved for him, as the last of the Apostolic line, to do the work of finishing. Hence, he is termed also the Apostle of completion. He specially preaches and presses on the Church, while he also represents in himself, the LOVE which is most needed to give power and perfectness to the Christian body.

In the Apostolic history we find him alone on the stage during nearly forty years, and engaged in Apostolic labors during the long term of nearly threescore and ten years. We find him a party in the *first miracle*, (Acts 3: 1, &c.) where Peter, as usual, was the speaker—We find him a victim of the first persecution, (Acts 4: 3,) and recognized as one of the two "who had been with Jesus"—at the trial, (Acts 4: 13.) Though his name is not given, nor that of any but Peter, he was in all probability one of the Apostles who was thrust into the common prison and miraculously delivered at night by the Angel of the Lord. (Acts 5: 18-20.) He was also engaged with Peter in the temple, and in every house teaching and preaching Jesus Christ. (Acts 5: 42.) We find him sent

down with Peter to Samaria, to lay hands on the baptized converts of Philip the deacon, and thus to give Apostolic sanction to that work of first extending Christianity beyond the limits of Jerusalem and Judaism to the mongrel Samaritans. (Acts 8: 14, &c.) There we see John praying for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the same Samaritan people, upon whom he was ready once before to call down fire (of wrath) from Heaven.

The next scene in which we meet him, is that in which he is called to mourn the violent death of his brother James, by the hand of Herod. (Acts 12: 2.) Subsequently to this he is in his place at the Apostolic Synod convened at Jerusalem, (Acts 15,) where Paul found him with Peter and the other James, as Apostles of the circumcision and pillars of the church, (Gal. 2: 1-9,) though he did not see him on his first visit. (Gal. 1: 19.) His labors thus far were confined chiefly to the Jews and to Jerusalem. We add from Tholuck.

“As he took the mother of Jesus to his own house, that in accordance with the request of Jesus he might sustain to her the part of a son, (John 19: 27,) and as this house probably was in Jerusalem, tradition has drawn the inference that he did not leave Jerusalem before Mary’s death, which, according to Eusebius, took place A. D. 48. This much is certain, that John, at the time when Paul was in Ephesus, that is A. D. 58 or 59, was not yet in that city which became the scene of his later labors; for not only would not Paul labor in places which had been occupied by others, and therefore would not have intruded upon the territory occupied by John, but besides there is a scene (Acts 20: 17,) in which mention of John could not have been avoided had he then been in Ephesus. When, too, Paul wrote his Epistles to Timothy at Ephesus, John was not there. Yet when Paul afterwards comes to Jerusalem, (Acts 21: 18,) he does not find John there—his absence, however, can hardly have been more than temporary, like the one mentioned. (Acts 8: 14.) The first occasion for John leaving Jerusalem was probably furnished by the death of Paul; as Asia Minor, where the Christian churches were very numerous, but where also doctrinal errors of the most dangerous character germinated, was the very region to demand the oversight and fostering care of an Apostle. This would bring us to about A. D. 64 or 65. Where he spent the period from A. D. 50 to A. D. 64, we are not informed. But how he spent it we can have no doubt.

“During the labors of the Evangelist in those portions of Asia Minor, he was banished by one of the Emperors (Domitian,) to Patmos, one of the islands of the Sporades in the Ægean sea, where, according to Rev. 1: 9, he wrote the Apocalypse. Irenæus (Adv. Hæres. 5: 30,) and Eusebius following him, (Hist. Eccles. L. III. c. 18,) say, that the Apocalyptic vision was given to John at the end of the reign of Domitian. As this account may be credited, the banishment must have occurred under Domitian, who died A. D. 96. We find in addition, in Tertullian (Præscript adv. hæret. c. 36,) and in Jerome, who adopts his statement, (adv. Iovin. L. I. c. 14; in Matt. 20: 23, and in other passages,) an account of John’s being taken to Rome under Domitian, of his being cast into a vessel of boiling oil, of his miraculous deliverance from it, and of his being subsequently removed to Patmos. As this, however, rests on the authority of no ancient writer, except Tertullian, who was not very critical, and as this sort of capital punishment was unknown in Rome, no importance can be attached to it. (See Mosheim Dissertat. ad. Hist. Eccles. vol. I. p. 497, seq.) There is an independent testimony that John suffered for the faith, in the fact that Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, (about A. D. 200) calls him *μάρτυς*, ‘a martyr’ (Eusebius. Hist. Eccles. V. 24,) though this is disputed. The return from exile is to be dated under Nerva. (Euseb. Hist. Eccles. L. III. c. 20: 23. Jerome Catal. Scriptor. Eccles. c. IX.) In the Ecclesiastical tradition he appears as the centre of the church life in Asia Minor, in so much that

in the controversies, as for example the one about Easter, and in the struggle with the Gnostics, he is referred to, and frequent mention is made of his disciples and hearers. When upwards of ninety years of age (according to Jerome, he was a hundred, according to Suidas a hundred and twenty years old,) he died at Ephesus, in the reign of Trajan.

#### CONTENTS AND FORM OF JOHN'S GOSPEL AS COMPARED WITH THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS.

“With reference to its contents and form, this Gospel is, throughout, peculiar, and in this peculiarity lies a charm and a power of attraction, which have not only caused it to be preferred to the other Gospels, but have led many to rank it above all other Books of the Bible. All the leaders of the voice of the Church have been full of its praises. Augustine (Tract. 36, in Johan.) declares: ‘In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one gospel, the apostle John, not undeservedly with reference to his spiritual understanding compared to *an eagle*, has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up, he has wished our hearts also to be lifted. For the other three Evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as man: of His divinity they said but few things; but John, as if it oppressed him to walk on earth, has opened his words as it were with a burst of thunder, has lifted himself not only above earth and every sphere of sky and heaven, but even above every host of angels and every order of invisible powers, and reaches to Him, by whom all things were made, as he says: ‘In the beginning was the Word,’ &c. He proclaims other things in keeping with this great sublimity with which he begins, and speaks of the divinity of our Lord as no other person has spoken. He pours forth that of which he had drunk. For not without a reason is it mentioned in his own Gospel, that at the feast he reclined upon the bosom of his Lord. From that bosom he had in secrecy drunk in the stream, but what he drank in secret he poured forth openly.’ And Origen (Comm. p. 6, Ed. Huet.) says: ‘We may presume then to say that the Gospels are the first fruits of all the Scriptures, and the first fruits of the Gospels is that of John, into whose meaning no man can enter, unless he has reclined upon the bosom of Jesus . . . he must become a second John, and take John as a Jesus from Jesus.’ (Origen means to say, the Expositor must so enter into the spirit of John, that John, as one filled by Jesus, appears as the counterpart of Jesus himself.) . . . Herder exclaims: ‘It is written by the hand of an angel.’ This impression is a result as well of the literary form of the Gospel as of its substance. As regards the substance, it is more detached from special Jewish references than the others, and appeals in a more lively manner to the sensibilities than do the instructions mostly bearing on practical life, which are recorded in the synoptical Gospels. The superhuman in Christ, the necessity of faith in Him, regeneration, the mystical union of believers with Him and with one another, the commandment of love and the blessing attached to it, these are the chief themes of John’s teaching, and many of the facts recorded by him, and peculiar to his Gospel, correspond with them. Among these are presented the condescending love of Christ seeking men, His tender relation as a man to John, His position of earnestness, yet of forbearance toward His betrayer, His superhuman knowledge, His glorification in suffering, and the obstinate unbelief of the world. To this substance, the peculiar character of the author’s spirit impressing itself on the language, has imparted a form which enlists the sensibilities in a high degree. The noble simplicity on the one side, on the other its indeterminateness, the dim mystery of the narration, the tone of grief and of longing with the light of love shedding its tremulous beam on the whole, these impart to the Gospel a charm, a peculiar originality.



to which, out of the writings of John no parallel can be found. To these is to be added the plastic power of the narrative to bring its scenes vividly before the eye. The localities are fully marked, c. 1: 28; 4: 5; 5: 2; 6: 59; 10: 23—the dates, 4: 6; 5: 9; 6: 4; 7: 2—personal traits, 11: 5; 12: 29; 18: 10; 7: 25—manners, 2: 6; 4: 9; 18: 39; 19: 31—gestures and passions, 18: 6, 8; 11: 35, 38. The fact, too, that Christ's discourses rather than outward facts, are given at large, that the disciple not only stands *before* the history of the Lord, but *in* it and over it, and, as is the method in every work of Art, reproduces it from a noble subjectivity, and accompanies it with remarks of his own, (2: 21; 3: 16, 31: 6: 64; 7: 39; 10: 6; 12: 33, and 35—50; 19: 35—29, 30, 31.) contributes to impart to this delineation a life and vivifying character beyond that of the other Evangelists.

"Precisely these peculiarities, nevertheless, in the substance and form of the Gospel, which have excited the praises of the leading spirits of all ages, have furnished the points on which, in recent times, the most formidable attacks have been made on its genuineness and authenticity. The more widely the fourth Gospel deviates from the type of the first three, the more distinct the history and the discourses both in form and substance, the more ready have modern doubters been to dispute, first, its authenticity, and then its genuineness." (Tholuck's Int., 6th Edition, Krauth.)

But this Gospel narrative would naturally enough be different from the rest, supposing John—or the Holy Spirit acting in John—to have had any distinct object in writing it at a period so much later in the Apostolic age. The circumstances of the Church would be different, calling for the Life of Christ in still a different aspect. The early struggles with Pharisaic Judaism, from the time of Stephen, and through the labors of Paul, had passed through great crises, such as the Apostolic Synod, (Acts 15,) A. D. 50, and the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, A. D. 70. It was in the direction of the great doctrine of *universality* as distinct from Jewish *exclusiveness* that the first three Evangelists had set forth the Christian system as a system intended to extend to all nations. The narrative of John pre-supposes the former Gospel histories, and therefore passes over many important items as familiarly known. Already, in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Timothy, and in Peter's second Epistle, and that of Jude, another element of heresy had been aimed at, as working more or less in vain speculations about the person and work of Christ. This, together with the old workings of dissent in the outward body of believers, tending to a final separation of the strict Jewish element, presented a new aspect of things—new difficulties which John was most adapted to meet—and a new phase of error, or rather a group of errors in new combinations, which it was the mission of his Gospel narrative by the Spirit to provide against, in the way not of direct confutation, but of doctrinal testimony, which would stand as a protest against all the like errors to all time. Unbelief in Christ was that sin of which the Holy Spirit would convict the world at His coming—and the sin and the conviction are going on to this day. And what portion of Scripture is more adapted to work the conviction, or more employed by the Spirit for that end, than this Gospel by John? The great doctrine of Justification by faith, which Paul had so elaborated, was not fully brought out by the Fathers, except by Augustin and his school, so that its neglect and perversion in the nominal Christendom called loudly for the Reformation. Hosts of sects sprang up with every hue and form of error in regard to the proper Godhead of Christ.

Such as Arius in the fourth century, with all his train of Socinians, &c., have kept up the perversion. And even now, the denial of Christ's proper Godhead is the sin of our day. And John's profound, loving statements, and his embodiment of the Discourses of our Lord are for us and for all time, a

refutation of the whole tribe of errors on this vital point, and prove themselves wonderfully adapted to us, as truly as to any past age.

Hence, while the other Evangelists begin from below and go upward, tracing our Lord's History from Abraham, (as Matthew,) or from Adam, (as Luke,) John begins above and comes downward—tracing our Lord from His eternal abode with the Father, and coming down to His earthly estate. And everywhere he plainly draws his language from the bosom of his Lord, on which he leaned.

## THE GOSPEL HARMONY.

We suppose that, on the whole, no "Synopsis of the Harmony" is preferable to that of Gresswell, adopted by Robinson. Not, that it is, in every particular beyond dispute—not that in some respects it might not be corrected—but it must be borne in mind that any attempt at harmonizing, can be expected only to approximate an adjustment of all points—that, in such condensed narratives, we must needs lack much of the filling up which would serve to reconcile the accounts—and that if we were furnished with full particulars from each of the narrators, the whole business of harmonizing would be comparatively easy. Some critics, as Alford, hold it quite impossible to construct any satisfactory harmony of the fragmentary narratives as we have them. See "Synopsis of the Harmony." *Notes on Matt.*

The History is properly divided into nine parts.

Part I, relating to "*the birth and childhood of our Lord, with the events connected,*" covers about *thirteen and a half years*. This begins with the preface to Luke's Gospel History, and extends to our Lord's first visit to the Temple at Jerusalem, on his reaching twelve years of age. This portion of the history is given mainly by Luke, in part by Matthew, and not at all by either Mark or John. The birth of John the Baptist is given by Luke alone—the birth of Jesus chiefly by Luke, and only impliedly by Matthew, while Matthew, and not Luke, gives the angel's appearing to Joseph, announcing the birth as to occur; and Luke, and not Matthew, gives the angel's appearing to the shepherds, announcing the birth as *having occurred*. Luke alone gives the visit to the Temple for His circumcision and presentation, while Matthew alone records the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus at Bethlehem. The flight into Egypt is recorded by both these Evangelists, and the going up to the Temple at twelve years of age, is recorded by Luke only.

Here occurs an interval of *sixteen and a half years*.

The marked silence in regard to this portion of our Lord's history, would seem to be rather for the purpose of magnifying His Public work, in comparison of which His private and preliminary life sinks into insignificance, and in reference to which alone it must have all its importance. (See *Trench Huls. Lect.*)

Part II relates to the announcement and introduction of our Lord's Public Ministry, covering about *one year*, and beginning at within six months of our Lord's entrance upon His Public Ministry. At this point John the Baptist's Ministry commences—six months prior to our Lord's, as we infer from his being born six months earlier, and entering upon his work at the same time of life, as provided by the law. The three synoptical Evangelists give John's

Ministry, Christ's Baptism and Temptation, and then at this point *John begins his narrative*, with the Baptist's Testimony, Jesus's first gathering of disciples, and the first Miracle—at the marriage at Cana in Galilee.

Part III relates to our Lord's *First Passover*, with the leading events to the Second Passover, covering, of course, ONE YEAR.

We observe here, that John alone gives our Lord's signal and symbolical transaction at His First Passover, driving the traders out of the Temple, while the other three Evangelists narrate the second cleansing towards the close of our Lord's Ministry. At the first cleansing, as given by John, Jesus said, "make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." At the second cleansing, as given by the others, He said more severely, as was fit, "Ye have made it a den of thieves." John alone records, according to his doctrinal aim, the conversation of Jesus with the noted Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrim, who sought some enlightenment as to His work. He alone gives also Jesus's further step of teaching and baptizing, and the Baptist's further testimony to Him; while the four Evangelists record John the Baptist's *imprisonment*, and Jesus's *departure* into Galilee—THE EVENT, *observe*, upon which hinges the Public Ministry of our Lord. That in Judea had been preliminary. Accordingly the PUBLIC TEACHING of Jesus in Galilee, which begins at the time of John's Imprisonment, is given by all the four Evangelists, while John, who attended afterwards on the first propagation of the Gospel in Samaria, records the interesting conversation with the Samaritan woman. The only other event under this First Passover, which John narrates, is the second miracle of our Lord, which was wrought at the same place as the first—the healing at Cana of the Capernaum nobleman's son. After this, Matthew and Luke record our Lord's visit to Nazareth, and His rejection there. The three Synoptists give the call of Peter and Andrew, James and John, with the first miracle of the fishes. John, observe, does not narrate the circumstances, or even the fact of his own call. Of course, however, it is taken for granted in all his narrative.

After this, the other Evangelists relate four works of healing at or near Capernaum, where our Lord went from Nazareth, on His rejection, and they close with the call of Matthew the Publican, at Capernaum.

John has thus far glanced lightly at the leading points of the history, and has followed the chronological order.

Part IV, which covers the second year of our Lord's Public Ministry, opens with John's narrative of the cure wrought by our Lord upon the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, (Jerusalem.) chap. 5. After this he gives us no record of the important events which occurred during this year, until, just at its close, he records the return of the twelve Apostles, (which of course implies their call and commission, though he has not recorded these,) and the miracle of feeding the five thousand, our Lord's walking upon the water, and His discourse to the multitude in the Synagogue at Capernaum, which led to the turning back of many, and was followed by Peter's confession of faith. All these items are given in one chapter. (Ch. 6.)

The solemn designation of the twelve Apostles, is given by Mark and Luke. The Sermon on the Mount is given by Matthew and Luke. This prominent discourse of our Lord we should rather have expected to get from John also, though on examination we see how it is suited rather to Matthew's object of setting forth the relations to the old economy; and to Luke's object of proclaiming the great Scriptural principle of *universality* in the Gospel call. Many miracles and teachings of our Lord, with some Parables, are meanwhile recorded, usually by two of the Evangelists, and often by three. The instructions and mission of the twelve are given by Matthew only.

PART V, which covers a period of six months, is remarkable as having only one item recorded by John, and that at the close, the important visit of our

Lord to Jerusalem, at the Feast of Tabernacles, and His final departure from Galilee, with the incidents in Samaria. (Chap. 7: 2-10.)

PART VI, covering the next six months, and bringing us to the last week of our Lord's history before His death, gives us John's account of our Lord's Discourses at the Festival of Tabernacles, which no other Evangelist has given. And throughout this part we find John giving the narrative of events at and about Jerusalem, while the other Evangelists, and especially Luke, give the incidents, parables, &c. in the journey to Perea. The healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus, are given by John alone, inasmuch as these miracles were directly connected, in John's view, with the Crucifixion. He then passes to the close of this Part, our Lord's arrival at Bethany after the opening of the Passover week. (Ch. 11: 55; ch. 12.)

PART VII, which covers only five days, opens with John's narrative of our Lord's Public Entry into Jerusalem, (ch. 12: 12-19,) after which, passing over even this cleansing of the Temple, he notes the visit of the Greeks inquiring after Christ, and gives the profound and precious reflections of our Lord on that striking occasion; whence he passes by even the final departure from the Temple, to record the conspiring of the Rulers, and the Treachery of Judas. (Ch. 12: 2-8.)

PART VIII is more fully given by John, in connexion with all the other Evangelists, the fourfold witness being thus remarkably furnished to these closing facts of our Saviour's sufferings and death. John here brings forward those golden Discourses, and that wonderful Intercessory Prayer of our Lord, (chs. 14 to 17,) by the aid of that Spirit which was promised in them, especially to the twelve, for this purpose. Remarkable as it is, John alone omits the account of the Lord's Supper, while he alone gives the promise of the Comforter. He alone omits also the agony in Gethsemane, the rending of the Temple Vail, and of the graves of the Saints. These leading events were familiarly known.

PART IX, covering the Resurrection and subsequent forty days, is given very much in detail by John, though he omits some particulars furnished by the other Evangelists, as the appearing of our Lord to Peter, and to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, as also to the Apostles and above five hundred brethren on a Mountain in Galilee. He alone gives the striking account of Thomas, as he was challenged by the wounds of our Lord, and was led to cry out in view of Christ, as a personal Saviour, "MY LORD AND MY GOD."

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

## CHAPTER I.

**I**<sup>a</sup> <sup>a</sup> the beginning was the Word, <sup>b</sup> and the Word was

<sup>a</sup> Pr. 8. 22-31, Col. 1. 16, 27. 1 Jno. 1. 1. <sup>b</sup> Re. 19. 13.

## CHAPTER I.

The commencement of John's narrative is at the 17th Section of the history. (See Synopsis in front of Vol. I.) The other Evangelists have given particulars preparatory to Christ's birth. Luke began with the birth of John the Baptist. John omits all these early details, which he supposes to be perfectly familiar, and at once proceeds to treat of Christ as the Son of God. He passes by the whole of Part I, connected with the birth and childhood of our Lord, and omits in Part II the ministry of John the Baptist, and even the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus as given by the other Evangelists.

### § 17. PREFACE TO JOHN'S GOSPEL HISTORY.

|       |       |       |          |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|       |       |       | 1. 1-18. |

1-18. The Evangelist opens his Gospel narrative with this introductory passage. It sets forth the glorious subject of his history, and shows his own particular object as a historian. These statements are, indeed, a brief compend of the whole Gospel record as he designs to give it. The summary is this—

God revealed Himself in the Personal Word. The Word was Eternal, was the Creator of all things, was life and light to men, became man, dwelt among us, was witnessed to by John the Baptist, rejected by His own people, but was received by some, to whom he gave the prerogative to become sons of God. He was the perfection and end of God's revelation of Himself, and so was far greater than Moses.

Quesnel calls the first verse "the Gospel of the most Holy Trinity. Our knowledge thereof ought to begin with

with <sup>c</sup> God, and the Word was <sup>d</sup> God.

<sup>c</sup> Re. 17. 5. <sup>d</sup> Ph. 2. 6. He. 1-8-13.  
1 John 5. 7.

that of **THE SON**," who reveals the Father, and whom the Holy Spirit reveals to us.

1. *In the beginning.* According to John's object, as appears in all the history, he begins by setting forth the eternal pre-existence of Jesus Christ, His personal co-existence with the Father, and His divine essence as God. Here, therefore, he goes back to *the beginning*—the origin of all things, to which Moses went back in his history of the Creation, when he said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And John says "In the beginning," at this commencement of all things, the Word *was*—the Word *already existed*. Of course, then, the Word existed before all created things. There can be but one Being who is uncreated, and He can never have had a beginning, and this Being is God. And, as he further shows in verse 3, this very Word was so far from being created at that time or at any time, that all things were made by Him. This, of itself, would prove Him to be God. This agrees with what our Lord declared of Himself, (8: 58,) "Before Abraham was, I AM." And John, (vs. 18,) "No man hath seen God at any time; *the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father*, He hath declared Him."

If the phrase, "in the beginning," which is here used so unqualifiedly, be taken to refer to that absolute original which is eternity, the sense would be, *In eternity the Word WAS, OR EXISTED*. As there is nothing here to define this beginning, nothing of which a beginning is mentioned, as in Gen. 1: 1, but as it is absolutely "*the beginning*" that is spoken of, this might be the sense of the phrase here. ¶ *Was—existed*. This

term does not mean *was created or was made, or began to be*. Quite a different word is used in vs. 14, where the Evangelist speaks of what this Eternal Word *became*, when He took our flesh. But here the verb *to be* is in the indefinite past, and means *existed*. The Word existed already, in the beginning. The terms cannot possibly teach anything less than the great truth that Jesus Christ existed in eternity, an enduring, timeless existence, before the foundation of the world. See Col. 1: 16, 17; Rev. 22: 13; 1 John 1: 1, 2, 13; Isa. 43: 13; Prov. 8: 23. So John, in other terms sets forth the Eternity of the Word, in 1 John 1: 2, as "that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Augustine says, "He who is in the beginning, comprehended every beginning within Himself." The Word already existed in the beginning, and therefore was without beginning. See chap. 3: 13; 6: 46, 62; 17: 5; 8: 14; 16: 28. So says Paul to the Colossians, "He is before all things," the beginning, the Great First Cause. Col. 1: 16-18. So John, in the Revelation, heard Him call Himself, "the Alpha and the Omega," (Rev. 1: 8,) "the beginning of the creation of God," (Rev. 3: 14,) who *gave* it "beginning," the original source of all creature existence. So in the first Epistle, John speaks of Christ as "that which was from the beginning." 1 John 1: 1, 2, 13. ¶ *The Word*. Greek, *The Logos*. That a Being, a Person, is meant by this term, is plain from all the context. It is He by whom all things were made, &c. vs. 3, 10, 11, 12. That this Being was none other than Jesus Christ, is also plain, for it is He who became flesh, (vs. 14,) and to whom John *bare witness*, vs. 15. See vs. 30. The term is never used to signify an attribute of God, as *Reason*. The usual Scripture sense is Speech, or Word. Calvin translates it "*Speech*." Christ is not so called as *He who speaks*, or as *He who is spoken of*, "the promised one," nor even as He who is the author of the Gospel word, but rather as He by whom God reveals Himself to man, and com-

municates His mind and will. Christ Jesus is the *Revealer* of the Godhead. "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." verse 18. The term "*Word*" would seem well adapted to express this. A *word* is that by which we communicate our thoughts to others. Our thoughts are even carried on in words. We think in words. They are the natural medium of our mental operations. The Word is one with God; and not as a mere acting out of God, or manifestation of Him, but as the Second Person of the glorious Trinity. As God in eternity loved, so He supremely loved this Being who was in *His bosom*. And in the fullness of time this Being "became flesh," and revealed God to man. At the very beginning of the Creation, God is represented as operating by His word, when He said "Let there be light," and this, in vs. 3, is referred to the agency of this Eternal, Personal Word. So, throughout the Old Testament, the Word of God came to be gradually more and more distinctly set forth as a personal revelation of God's mind and will in reference to man, just as the "WISDOM" was the personal revelation of Himself in regard to His own essence and attributes. Prov. 8: 9; Job 28: 12. We find also in the Jewish Targum, or paraphrase of the Historical Scriptures, dating near the time of our Lord, the name "*Word of Jehovah*" occurring to designate Jehovah, and especially the revelation of Jehovah in the *Schecinah*. See Da Costa's Four Witnesses, p. 249. So in Josh. 1: 9, the reading is given, "For the Word of the Lord thy God is thy helper, whithersoever thou goest." Josh. 3: 7. As my Word was the helper of Moses, so my Word will be thy helper. 2 Sam. 2: 1. David inquired through the Word of the Lord, &c. 2 Sam. 19: 7. For I swear by the Word of the Lord. The same term is used by the Chaldee paraphrasts, in passages which set forth the acts of God, as in Isa. 45: 12. "I (by my Word, Chald.) have made the earth," So, Isa. 58: 13, and Gen. 3: 8, "The voice of the Word of God

spake." They used it plainly in a *personal* sense. Also in the apocryphal books that were written before Christ, this use of the term is most apparent.

Among the Alexandrian Jews, who mixed their religious views with the Greek philosophy, (Plato's,) and with the Oriental mysteries, the term was employed to denote a kind of second person of God, but rather the *mind, word* or *reason* of the First Person. The writings of Philo, at the very time of Christ, are most remarkable in speaking of the Logos or Word, as a most exalted being, (or attribute,) but confused with false philosophies. From all these sources there would naturally be found among the early Christian converts such expressions, whether they had come from Judaism or from Paganism. John alone among the New Testament writers uses the term, in application to the Messiah, and he only in this introduction, and in his first Epistle and Revelation. 1 John 1: 1, 2; Rev. 19: 11-13. John therefore found the term already in common use, and he employs it without remark. False philosophy was dealing out to the world all kinds of error in regard to God, and the modes of the Divine existence. What darkened reason was thus struggling after, when "the world by wisdom knew not God," John was commissioned to set forth, as God's own Revelation of Himself. The Evangelist borrowed none of his doctrines from those systems. But he takes, in this case, a term that had become so universally familiarized in the chief philosophies of the world before Christ's coming, and this Logos that they had spoken of, so blindly and ignorantly, he declares unto them. See Introduction, (Object.) ¶ *With God.* In most intimate connexion with—"In the bosom of," (vs. 18.) This shows that the Logos or Word here spoken of, does not mean an attribute of God; for how absurd it would be to declare here by revelation, that the reason, or wisdom, or power of God was *with God*. This clause, therefore, shows us that the Being called "the Word," who was "made

flesh," (vs. 14,) was in most intimate union with God, and of course was in some respect to be distinguished from God, (the Father,) and yet in the next clause it is declared that the Word was truly and essentially God. Some have pretended that the Father and Son are only different modes of the Divine operation. But this is most carefully and expressly guarded against by this clause. There is a plain distinction here asserted between "the Word" and "God," and this is more fully explained in vs. 18, as "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." In ch. 17: 5, Jesus speaks of "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was." Wisdom in the Proverbs says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way. I was by Him as one brought up with Him." (Prov. 8: 22.) ¶ *Was God.* This clause is further necessary to declare the whole truth. *The Word* besides being "*with God*," and so, in some sense, making a distinction in the Godhead, was essentially and truly *God*. These clauses are to be taken together. They are both true—they are equally revealed, whether we can reconcile them plainly or not. We could not expect to understand perfectly the modes of the Divine existence. The philosophy of Philo taught that the Word was a second God, and so was with God, as beside the Eternal God. *Da Costa, p. 233.* Plato made the Word to be the mind, or reason of God, and a kind of Second Person, but not very God. John shows that the true Word, the true Revealer of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, was essentially God. He could not have meant to say that *God was the Word*, as some would read it, for he had just said that the Word was *with God* as somehow distinct from God, and he is all along speaking of the Word and describing the Word. And the Greek does not allow such a reading. Besides, in the next verse, the distinction in the Godhead is more particularly dwelt upon. Here the term "God" is without the article, and is meant to designate not the Father—as in the preceding

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

clause and in the following—but the Divine essence, in which the Son was equal with the Father. It is not intermediate or inferior Being that is spoken of, but one who is “the same in substance, equal in power and glory” with the Father—as is plainly shown from other passages of Scripture. This verse teaches—Ist. That the Word existed before all things, and from Eternity—and existed with God the Father—and was really and truly God. The Lord Jesus Christ was “*the Eternal Son of God*.” Christ is called God elsewhere, as ch. 20: 28; Rom. 9: 5; Heb. 1: 8, 9, 10–12; 1 John 5: 20.

2. Not only was the Word “in the beginning” as to *duration*—and “with God” as to *relation*—and “God,” as to *essence*, but the Word was in this relation from the very first. There never was a time when the Word was not with God. If the terms “in the beginning” refer to the creation of all things, (Gen. 1: 1,) when the Word already existed, it is here said that the Word already and always existed in this relation to the Father, of essential union. The distinction, in unity, is here more particularly pointed out. And as the union was from Eternity, it must have been in the nature or essence, and not any mere temporary connexion. This verse thus prepares the way for the next, which declares that the created universe was made by Him. So Solomon speaks of the Personal Wisdom, (Prov. 7: 30,) “Then was I by Him as one brought up with Him.” OBSERVE 1. John speaks of the Personal Word. 2. It is the same who was made or became *flesh*, and to whom John the Baptist testified, and this was Jesus Christ, who was the Eternal Son of God and became man. 3. He *was*, or *existed* already at the very first, and hence, was not created, but by Himself all things were created, (vs. 3,) and therefore He was no *creature*. 4. He was Himself *God*, (vs. 1,) and yet in some sense distinct from God the Father,

3 All <sup>a</sup> things were made by him; and without him was not

a Ps. 33. 6. Eph. 3. 9.

but not in any sense inferior—and hence, we learn that they are “one God—the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” How comforting is it that He by whom the worlds were made “*in the beginning*,” is He by whom God “*in these last days*” hath spoken to us, in the Gospel. Heb. 1: 2. “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh”—the Mediator of the New Covenant. Heb. 12: 24, 25.

3. *All things*, &c. In vs. 10, *the world*. As the term Logos means the Word, and is applied to the Son as the Revealer of the Godhead, it is now stated that He revealed the Godhead in the creation of the world. He is the creative Word of God. Of course He existed before the world was, and is no creature. He was in the bosom of the Father, (vs. 18,) and had His glory with the Father, (ch. 17: 5,) “before the world was;” and when the universe was created it was done *by Him*. “All things” cannot mean, as some say, *all Christian virtues*; for in vs. 10, it is distinctly said to be *the World*, which was made by Him. The Theosophists held that the *ύλη* or matter was co-eternal with God. John declares the contrary, viz: that the material universe was *created*, and was created *by Him*. Hebrews 1: 2; Rev. 4: 11; Col. 1: 16; 1 Cor. 3: 6. ¶ *Were made*. Literally, *became*; the term is used here in a sense distinct from independent, original being, such as that in vs. 1. HE WAS. The world *became*. He who *was*, (vs. 1,) *became* flesh, vs. 14. It is used of creating or forming out of nothing. See James 3: 9; Gen. 2: 4; Isa. 48: 7; *Gr. version*. ¶ *By Him*. All creature existence is traced up to Him, as therefore Heir of all things, (Heb. 1: 2,) where the Father is said to have created *by Him*, “By whom also He made the worlds.” All beings depend on Him, and He is, therefore, Proprietor of all. It was not by His external assistance, but by Him as the *Word*, the revealer



any thing made that was made.

4 In him <sup>a</sup> was life; and the life was the light <sup>b</sup> of men.

c. 15. 26. 1 John 5. 11. b c. 8. 12.

of the Godhead. This leads us back to Gen. 1: 3; where "God *said*, Let there be Light." This creative word of God is here referred to the Personal Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. What is said by Moses in Genesis to have been done by God, is here said to have been done by the Divine Word, who, therefore, *was God*, as is here said. Christ's creative work was the revealing or manifestation of the Father in creation. ¶ *And without Him*. The doctrine is now more fully stated, so that there can be no mistake. Literally—"and without Him *not one thing became, or was made*, which was made." By this it is shown that there could have been no independent power besides. All existences besides God had their origin in this way. Everything *became* or *was made thus*, and did not exist of itself—not even one thing of all. The doctrine which some held in John's time, that matter as an independent principle and the source of evil, existed of itself from Eternity, is here positively denied. Thus Omnipotence is ascribed to Jesus Christ. He was essential to the creation. This He could not be without being God Himself. The works of the Father are ascribed to Him. On this point also He rests his own claim. Ch. 10: 37. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." He is "equal in power and glory" with the Father. Philo and the philosophizing Jews and Gentiles of that time held that the Logos made the world *instrumentally*. (Virg. *Eneid*, VI, 724.) John accordingly here means to say that He made the world *efficiently*—on account of His oneness with the Father. He could not have had the capacity to execute such an office, if it had been entrusted or delegated to Him, unless He was God. How glorious that our Saviour is so Omnipotent—*able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God*

5 And the light shineth in <sup>c</sup> darkness; and the darkness comprehended <sup>d</sup> it not.

c c. 3. 19. d 1. Cor. 2. 14.

through Him. Heb. 7: 25. Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians, written probably some 30 years earlier than this, presents the doctrine of Christ's Creatorship more fully, with an eye to errors already existing, and with the intent of the Spirit to testify against kindred errors in all time. See Col. ch. 1: 16. "The inheritance of the saints in *light*," (vs. 4,) is called "the kingdom of the Son of His Love," (Col. 3: 35,) who is "the Image of the invisible God." Ch. 1: 18. "For by Him, (Literally, '*in Him*') were all things created, that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, &c., all things were created *by Him* and *for Him*. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist—who is the *beginning*." Thus His Creatorship is variously described. "Let no one say He is an inferior agent. The creation was *in Him*. Let no one say He is but a source. It is *by Him*. Let no one look on him as a mere deputy. It is *for Him*. He is the Supreme Creator—Himself the agent and end." See Dr. Eadie, *Colossians*.

4. *In Him was Life*. As the creation of all things was *by Him*, so all Life is to be traced up to Him as the original source. No creatures could have life except as through Him. He was the source of life to the animal and vegetable worlds. And in a much higher sense also, life, in its spiritual fullness is in Him, and *from Him* alone can true and eternal life be had. This prerogative in the spiritual world is most important. He claims it for Himself. John especially claims it for Him. In his 1st Epistle, 1: 1, he calls Him "the Word of Life." Comp. John 5: 26; 1 John 5: 11; with John 11: 25, and 14: 6. The Lord Jesus has life in Himself independently, (ch. 5: 26,) and this prerogative is given Him by the Father. He is come to

give life, (6: 33,)—eternal life—(17: 2). He is the Resurrection and the Life, (11: 25,) “the way and the truth and the life,” (ch. 14: 6). He *quickens* or “*gives life* to whom He will,” (ch. 5: 21.) See Eph. 2: 1. And John dwells much on this essential prerogative of the Son, as a self-subsisting Fountain of Life, and active source of Life to men. He is presented by John in the Revelation, as “He that liveth,” (Rev. 1: 18,) “and is alive forevermore.” So in 1 John, ch. 5: 20, “This is the true God and Eternal Life.” “The Word of Life,” (ch. 1: 1,) “that Eternal Life which was with the Father,” (ch. 1: 2,) “the Prince of Life,” (Acts 4: 15). This then belongs, and always did belong to the Divine Word to have Life in the true sense—life in its reality and perfection—spiritual life; and both the old and the new creation must be traced up to Him. Of course He must be God in a sense the most interesting to us. ¶ *The Life was the Light of men.* This Life which was in Him, was in Him as the Word, the Revealer of the Godhead to men, and this true Life works the only true Light in men. It is only by means of this life that they can have light—that is knowledge and happiness. All pretended light apart from this, is darkness. Light is essential to life in the vegetable world. But here the life which is in Christ is said to be essential to light. This does not mean merely that Christ is the Great Teacher, but that He is the dispenser of spiritual light—the only true light—enlightening men by enlivening them. So He says, “I am the Light of the World. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have THE LIGHT OF LIFE”—the light which is life. See ch. 8: 12; 9: 5; 12: 46, in all which passages He so calls Himself. He is here set forth, 1st. As the source and author of Life. 2d. As by means of this higher Life, the only dispenser of inward Light to men. He is THE Light, as the only true light—“that light,” (vs. 8,) “the true light,” (vs. 9). See 1 John 1: 5. John intends to describe Christ as more than a

Teacher. He was predicted as “a Light to the Gentiles,” as the author of salvation, the bringer and impartor of Light to benighted souls. The Messiah was promised in the Old Testament under the name of Light, (Isa. 60: 1,) the Light of the church, (Isa. 9: 2,) He is “the Sun of Righteousness,” (Mal. 4: 2,) who was to “arise with healing in His wings.” He is the brightness of the Father’s glory. All nations have regarded the Deity as full of *Light*—“Father of Lights.” See ch. 17: 3. “And this is Life Eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” John means here to set forth Christ’s glorious nature not only, but what He is to us, in His prophetic office. This He executes in revealing to us by His Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation. See ch. 2: 16–21. So the Apostle exhorts Christians to carry themselves as the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights (light bearers) in the world, holding forth (as a torch) the Word of Life. Phil. 2: 15, 16.

5. *Shineth.*—Shone, and is still shining. This refers to His manifestation in the world. He not only is essentially Life and Light—but he is this, as the Revealer of the Godhead to men. Accordingly, this is what Christ does as THE Light. It is the province of a light to shine. He *shineth* now, as all along in the past history of the race. This describes the whole process of this “light of life,” shining in this dark world, both through the dim Old Testament revelation, and through the scattered rays gleaming in the darkness of heathenism. Ch. 10: 16; 12: 52. ¶ *In darkness.* Literally, in the darkness (of the world.) This term is used in Scripture to denote ignorance, sin and misery among men—that state into which the fall brought mankind. See Eph. 4: 18, “having the understanding darkened.” In Luke 1: 78, Jesus is spoken of as the *Day-Spring* from on high, to give light to them that sit in darkness

6 There was a man <sup>a</sup> sent from God, whose name *was* John.

7 The same came for a witness

<sup>a</sup> Luke 3. 2, 3.

and in the region and shadow of death. See Isa. 9: 1, 2; Matt. 4: 16; John 3: 19, 20; Acts 26: 18; 1 John 1: 6; 2: 9, 11. ¶ *Comprehended.* The term here means *entertained*, or *retained*, with an allusion to the nature of darkness which, when it is very thick—"gross darkness," (Isa. 60: 2,) does not admit or embrace the light—(vss. 10, 11.) See ch. 3: 19. This is of course to be understood of the great majority—for there were some who *received Him*, (vs. 12,) by His grace. "This (therefore) is THE condemnation that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (ch. 3: 19.) Though this Divine Light shines, and has always shone in the world—though it is the office of this Light to shine as the true and only light of men, yet it shines in darkness and in a peculiar darkness—the darkness—gross darkness. Isa. 60: 2. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." 1 John 5: 19. "The people sat in darkness." Is. 42: 7. It was the nature of THE darkness—this deep darkness of the soul—this human ignorance, depravity and perverseness—to resist the light—not to entertain it nor to retain it. This is to be observed—that though light in the natural world scatters the darkness—yet here, in the spiritual world, the darkness is so deep and deplorable, that it does not take the light. "All mankind, by the fall, lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse." Thus far the statement is general. The Evangelist now comes to particulars.

6. Here he gives a passing reference to the History, which he afterwards dwells upon in detail. vs. 19. Passing by those manifestations under the Old Testament, which pointed forward to Christ, He comes to John the Baptist. All the prophets were rays of the approaching Sun. John was <sup>a</sup> ray sent forward in advance.

3

to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

¶ *There was.* This phrase does not mean merely—"a man was sent"—but, *there appeared a man who was sent* (according to prophecy, Mal. 3: 1; Isa. 40: 3,) from God. The Evangelist refers to this important appearing of John the Baptist—the immediate forerunner of Christ—as though the Baptist might easily have been mistaken for Him—as he really was mistaken by some. And John was a disciple of the Baptist, and was pointed by him to Christ. vss. 35, 36.

7. The Baptist's office is, therefore, clearly set forth—as to what he came for. His work was simply that of *a witness*—to bear witness of another—to herald one coming after. He himself had a testimony to give of what had been revealed to him in his own experience, but he had no other glory than such as he derived from this near and important relation to Christ. Some of the Baptist's disciples long insisted that he was the Messiah. There is no evidence that the Evangelist wrote his Gospel to disprove this, as some suppose. But it is important in proving Christ to be God, that he should show the Baptist's true relation to Christ, and especially that he should establish the truth by his express testimony. vs. 15. ¶ *To bear witness.* Literally—in order that he might bear witness concerning the Light. This was the direct object. ¶ *That.* This was the ultimate object of the Baptist's testimony—that all *men through—by means of him*—might believe. That is—that through his testimony all might believe on Christ. John therefore baptized, saying that they should believe on Him who should come after him, Acts 19: 4. He accordingly pointed his own disciples to Christ, when He appeared, (vs. 29,) and sent them to Him when they were in doubt. Matt. 11: 2.

8 He <sup>a</sup> was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

<sup>a</sup> Acts 19. 4.

8. Here it is further stated that John the Baptist was not the Christ. For when he first gave his testimony, and before Christ came, he was thought by many to be the Christ. The formal inquiry was made of him whether he was the Christ. vs. 19. Some, as the Fabii, continued so to regard him, and were not turned from this belief, even by the coming of Christ Himself. See Luke 3: 15. ¶ *He. ἐκεῖνος*—referring to the Baptist, as the inferior. ¶ *That Light.* Literally—**THE** Light. He was not the true Light, (vs. 9,) He was a Light—"a burning and a shining light," or *lamp*, (as the term is in ch. 5: 35, when applied to the Baptist,) for he derived all his light from Christ who was coming after—just as the sun lights up the moon and stars, till by his own coming he outshines them, and turns them pale. John himself was most careful not to be mistaken for Christ.

9. *The true Light.* Referring to Jesus—literally—*The Light which is true. ἀληθινόν.* The term means *original*, as distinct from that which is *secondary* and *derived*. It is used by John twenty-two times, and only five times by other New Testament writers. It agrees with John's object, which was to set forth Jesus as the original, Eternal source of Light and Life, to men. So he terms Him *the true vine*, (ch. 15,) "*the true bread*"—the bread in the *highest sense*—realizing in Himself perfectly, all that other bread only poorly represents. Ch. 6: 32. And so here He is called the true Light—as being **THE** Light in the highest sense—substantial instead of shadowy—and original instead of secondary, like John. He is also called by John, "*the true God.*" Ch. 17: 3. This is appropriate to Him who is treated of by the Evangelist as "*the Word.*" As the Revealer of the Godhead, He is the true, original Light from whom all

9 *That* was the true Light, <sup>b</sup> which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. 49. 6.

others must borrow, and from whom all His ministers and members may borrow, without making His Light the less. In the Old Testament already, Christ the glorious Son, had been represented as the Personal "*WISDOM.*" "I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions." Prov. 8: 12. And "in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colos. 2: 3. In Him is revealed the mystery hid from the foundation of the world. Ephes. 3: 8, 9. So it is said, in vs. 4, "*The Life was the Light of men.*" In His revelation of the LIFE that now is and of that which is to come, is found the truest Light—the most valuable knowledge and wisdom for any soul. So saith Wisdom, "*Blessed is the man that heareth me.* For whoso findeth *me* findeth LIFE." "All they that hate me love death." Prov. 8: 35, 36. ¶ *Lighteth every man.* See below. Hence, this is the condemnation which is pronounced against every man: that *light is come into the world*, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Ch. 3: 19. **OBSERVE**—1. As all the colors of the sunbeam make *light*, so all Christ's attributes combined, make *Light* without color and without any darkness at all. 1 John 1: 5. "The darkness is past and the *true Light* now shineth." 1 John 2: 8.—2. Christ is the true Light for men, as He is the true, original, substantial Reason—the true wisdom apart from which all is darkness and folly. ¶ *That cometh, &c.* Most critics agree that this cannot refer to "*every man,*" but to "*light,*" and that it is to be read, "*That was the true Light having come into the world, which lighteth every man,*" or, "*That was the true Light (which was to come into the world,) which lighteth every man.*" That the words "*which cometh,*" do not refer to "*every man,*" as in our En-

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and <sup>a</sup> the world knew him not.

a ver. 5.

glish version, is more probable, because they would convey no distinct sense, since, of course, every man "cometh into the world," or *is born*. And this expression is not so applied in Greek, besides which, it would require the article before the participle, to read, "that cometh," as referring to "every man." But further, in the New Testament Christ is spoken of as "*the comer*:"—"He that should come," (Matt. 11: 3,) the One predicted as *to come, or coming*, and the phrase "*who is coming*," or "*who cometh into the world*," is the usual expression to denote His Incarnation and personal manifestation among men. 3: 19; 6: 14; 9: 39; 11: 27; 12: 46. At the time when the Baptist gave this testimony, the true Light which lighteth every man, was coming—was in process of manifesting Himself—or was about coming into the world. He *lighteth every man*—as He is "the Light of men"—of *all men*, without distinction of Jew and Gentile. Besides, every man who is truly enlightened must owe it entirely to Him. And He offers His Light to every man freely. "He maketh His Sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Matt. 5: 45. He is in the highest sense, *light* to the soul, "the true light" to all—as it is His *province* to give light to all—the Sun of Righteousness, (Mal.)—just as the Sun shines for all, though many do not actually get the benefit of his beams. OBSERVE—I. Every man is by nature in darkness—in an estate of sin and misery. 2. Christ is the true, genuine and only saving Light for the soul. 3. No man can be truly enlightened, except by His Divine power and grace. Beyond all that human learning can do, and all that the most able teachers and pastors can do for men, they must have light from Christ, or must die in their sins. He executes the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us by His Word and Spirit

11 He <sup>b</sup> came unto his own, and his own received him not.

b Acts 3. 26. 13. 46.

the will of God for our salvation. 4. Christ is the only true Light for the world at large. 5. This Light will at length enlighten all nations. Isa. 60: 1, &c.

10. *In the world.* This refers back to vs. 5—where the previous operation of this Light in the world is alluded to, and here it is again declared that *the world* (in darkness,) *knew*—or "*comprehended*"—*Him not*. He who came into the world, in the Incarnation, was in the world before, under the old economy, as the Angel of the Covenant, (see Gen. 18: 23–33; 19: 18, 19; 1 Pet. 3: 18, 19,) and He afterwards "*became Flesh*," (vs. 14,) He was in the world *personally*, and not merely as Light. "*The angel of His presence*" it was, that accompanied the ancient covenant people under Moses. See Isa. 63: 9; Exod. 14: 19. This is mentioned here as a reason why the world should have known Him. A second reason is immediately added—that *the world was made by Him*, as already was stated in general terms. vs. 3. "The world" here means the world generally—the world of mankind at large. Though He operated among men, of old, through so many generations, and though by Him they were made, yet the world knew Him not. ¶ *Knew Him not*. As it had been declared (vs. 5,) that the darkness and depravity of the world did not entertain the Light, so here it is more distinctly said, that the world of mankind did not know Him, though He was among them of old. They did not recognize Him.

11. *He came, &c.* This is a step further in the manifestation of the Divine Word. In vs. 9, He had been referred to as "*the comer*," as "*He who was to come*"—who having been predicted of old, and more and more manifested under the old economy, at length *came*. ¶ *Unto His own*. As Israel had all along, of old, been the

12 But as many<sup>a</sup> as received him, to them gave he<sup>1</sup> power to become

<sup>a</sup> 1s. 56 4. 5. Ro. 8. 15, 1 Jno. 3. 1. 1 or, *the right*; or, *privilege*.

the sons of God, *even* to them<sup>b</sup> that believe on his name.

<sup>b</sup> Ga. 3. 26.

people to whom He specially manifested Himself, and to whom He was plainly predicted as to come, so He came to them. They are here called *His own*, and the term which is neuter here, means, His own possessions. His people are often spoken of as *His inheritance—purchased possession*, &c. Eph. 1: 18. But the temple also is called *His own*—and He is predicted by Malachi, as about *suddenly to come to His temple*, (ch. 3: 1,) as “the Messenger of the covenant,” &c. So the Holy Land was called *His own*, (Joel 2: 18,) and His holy hill of Zion. Joel 3: 17. ¶ *And His own*. Here the term is masculine, and refers to His own *people*, as distinct from the race beside—“the world.” Though the world of mankind had not recognized Him, it might have been expected that His own people would know Him when He came. He answered to the prophetic descriptions. He fulfilled in Himself all that was foreshadowed of the coming Messiah. And yet His own people to whom were committed the oracles of God, (Rom. 3: 2,) and whose were the promises, (Rom. 9: 4,) even they did not know Him. As a class, they even denied Him and rejected and crucified Him. Acts 3: 14. ¶ *Received*. This term implies personal reception of one as a friend and companion. See Matt. 15: 24. It was true of His own people as a body that they did not embrace Him as their Messiah, and as their personal friend, but despised and rejected Him, as the Nazarene and the Galilean. John shows in the further history of our Lord, how they rejected the evidence which He gave of His Divinity from His miracles—and how they charged Him with blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God. OBSERVE—1. The depravity of mankind is clearly shown by the universal rejection of Jesus. 2. Even they who have enjoyed the best opportunities, and highest

privileges have been found to reject Him, no less than others. 3. Unless men have an inward illumination, the light of the gospel will not avail.

12. *But as many, &c.* Inasmuch as the Jews, who were His ancient covenant people rejected Him, He extended the benefits of His covenant to all nations—even to *as many*—of whatever name or nation, Jew or Gentile—as *received Him*, (See Acts 10: 34, 35, 43,) which were not of the seed of Abraham—and not born of a particular blood. vs. 13. This change in the dispensation of grace had been predicted by the prophets, (Isa. 49: 20–22; 60: 3; 66: 12,) and John had lived to see it fulfilled. National distinctions were far wiped out. Barriers from different blood were much broken down. The new covenant extended its blessings to all, “where there is neither Greek nor Jew,” but CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL.” John had seen churches founded, first among the Jews, and afterwards at Antioch, and Ephesus, and Alexandria, and Rome, and in all chief cities of the Empire, among the Jews and Gentiles together. This was the grand result which is traced out in “the Acts”—which Peter had had revealed to him in vision. Acts 10. This purpose Paul was raised up to carry out. Acts 13: 47. This turning aside to the Gentiles, as to be admitted on a level with the Jews, followed upon the rejection of Christ by the Jews, when they “received Him not.” This was declared by Paul and Barnabas to the unbelieving, persecuting Jews at Antioch in Pisidia. “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you. *But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles!* For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” Acts 13.

13 Which were born, \* not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,

a Ja. 1. 18.

46, 47.—¶ *To them.* To whoever received, or embraced Him by faith, to them He gave the privilege which before this had belonged to the Jews alone, of being His own people, *His children*. 1 John 3: 1; Rom. So the true, believing church foresaw in the prophet's time (Isa. 63: 16; 64: 8,) that, though the outward Israel was to be rejected for their rejection of Christ, the true believers—whoever they might be—would be admitted into this relation of sons—and that though Abraham be ignorant of us, doubtless Jehovah is our Father, if we receive His Son as our Saviour. ¶ *Power.* εἰσὸςια. The term means *privilege, prerogative*. It refers to that spiritual privilege and prerogative which was typified by that outward relation of the ancient Israel. This was the true Israel, after the spirit; admitted now, to sonship, by faith and not by descent. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8: 14. ¶ *The sons of God.* Literally—*children of God*. The term for "*sons*" is different and not so comprehensive, while this refers also, more especially to the mode in which they are here said to become such—namely to the *new birth*. The same term is used in 1 John 3: 1. "Behold what manner of love," &c., and in Rom. 8: 16; 17: 21. "If children, then heirs," &c. ¶ *That believe.* Faith is the mark of sons under the new economy, and not any descent from Abraham, as of old. ¶ *In His name.* The name of God is that whereby He makes Himself known. And He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and more especially under the New Testament, as He came into the world (vs. 11,) in a full, personal manifestation. To believe on His name is therefore to believe in God, as revealed to us by Jesus Christ, whose Incarnation is spoken of by John. Faith in Christ is now the grand mark of distinction. Men are believers or unbelievers.

3\*

nor of the will of man, but of God.

"He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." It is faith which unites to Christ, makes us stand in Him, and rests upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel. So John in his 1st Epistle, celebrates this grace of God in Christ. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3: 1.

13. *Which were born.* These believers of all classes, are not distinguished by *eminent human birth*, as the Jews boasted their descent from Abraham, but by the *new birth*, which Christ explained to Nicodemus. Ch. 3. They are led by the Spirit of God; and their being sons, and their having the mark of "sons of God" in a living faith, proves them to have been born of God. Rom. 8: 14. They are shown to be the sons of God because they "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8: 14, 15. God hath sent forth the Spirit of His son into their hearts. OBSERVE—1. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, *enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ*, and renewing our will, He doth *persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ* freely offered to us in the Gospel." 2. True believers are admitted to the privilege of sons, without regard to name or class or previous standing. ¶ *Not of blood.* Literally—*of bloods*—of one, or another, or any long succession. See Matt. 27: 4. These Jews, even while they rejected Christ, boasted of being born of Abraham, and of having the prerogative of children of God by such birth of blood. Matt. 3: 9. But all such distinction was put away under the New Testament, and true believers of all names were admitted as being of the true family of Christ. 2 Cor. 11: 22, 23; 1 Pet. 1: 23. "And not because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children." Rom. 9: 7.

14 And the Word <sup>a</sup> was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and <sup>b</sup> we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full <sup>c</sup> of grace and truth.

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 1. 35. 1 Ti. 3. 16. <sup>b</sup> 2 Pe. 1. 17. 1 Jno. 1. 1, 2.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 45. 2. Col. 2. 3, 9.

¶ *The will of the flesh.* The natural, fleshly will. The natural will is depraved. Eph. 2: 3. Therefore effectual calling consists in "*renewing our will*" as well as enlightening, &c. That will which we have by nature, cannot change itself. It must be changed by a higher power. ¶ *The will of man.* This may refer to the will of other men. We sometimes are admitted to the children's place by *adoption of men*. But no such human arrangement can serve us in this case. Or, it may refer to the influence which men exercise over one another—and then it would mean, that this new birth is not by the power of human eloquence, or reason or persuasion. Men cannot work this saving change in their fellow men by any boasted power of theirs. Those who claim to convert others, and who declare that the Spirit of God is not necessary, but only the right presentation of truth, are here taught that the new birth is not within their power. ¶ *But of God.* This work is that of God alone. Those who are true believers, and who are here spoken of as admitted to be the true children of God are *born of God*. John speaks of such in his Epistles, and sets forth their characteristics—that they overcome the world. 1 John 5: 4. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." They *sin not* (1 John 5: 18,) as others sin, habitually and of choice. 1 John 3: 9. This doctrine of the new birth Christ sets forth to Nicodemus—that it is by the Spirit, (ch. 3: 6,) and entirely another thing from being "born of the flesh," (3: 7,) or corrupt nature, which must needs be a corrupt birth: "For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14: 4. OBSERVE—1. Our first business is to embrace Jesus Christ, as He is freely offered to us in the Gospel. 2. It is not any outward relation or standing

even in the church—not pious parentage nor outward baptism that makes us the children of God. 3. The true *mark* of children is a living faith in Christ. 4. All who have faith, and who prove their faith by their Christian lives, prove also that they have been born of God. 5. None who have not had this *new birth*, can be true believers, or true children of God. 6. Salvation is all of grace. The privilege of being sons is a free gift, which shows the wonderful love of God.

14. *Was made flesh.* Literally—*became flesh.* He who in vs. 9, is spoken of as the Light about to come, and in vs. 11, as having come to His chosen people, is here set forth as the original Word, now taking human flesh. He became Incarnate. 1 John 4: 2. He who was with God from Eternity, and who was God, (vs. 1,) and by whom all things were made, (or *became*, had their existence) *became* flesh. Verses 1 and 2 show what He originally and essentially *was*. This verse shows what He *became*, and the term is different. ¶ *Flesh.* This is the general expression for human nature. See Matt. 16: 17; 19: 5; 24: 22. He took our flesh with its weakness and suffering, but not with its sin. Rom. 7: 18. He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham and not that of angels. "As the children were partakers of flesh and blood He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same." Heb. 2: 14. See 1 John 4: 2; 1 Tim. 3: 16; Phil. 2: 6; 2 Cor. 8: 9. There were these in John's time who believed that the body of Christ was not real, but only imaginary. This statement would contradict such an absurdity. Others, as Apollinaris, believed that Christ had not a human soul. "The son of God became man, by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul." It is not meant that the Eternal Word was *changed to*



man, so as to be no longer God, (vs. 1,) but that He took to Himself our human nature. So He said, "A body hast thou prepared me." Heb. 10: 5. The Lord Jesus Christ is He "who being the Eternal son of God became man, and so was and continues to be, *God and man*, in two distinct natures and one person forever." ¶ *Dwelt*. Literally—*tabernacled*. Pitched His tent, or dwelt as in a tent. From the corresponding term is the word *Shekinah*; and also our English word *Scene*. It has a reference to His manifestation—and so it is added, "*we beheld His glory*." "Really and briefly, he afforded a spectacle of Himself."—*Bengel*. The word is also used in Scripture for the dwelling of God among men. Rev. 7: 15; 12: 12; 13: 16; 21: 3. See Levit. 26: 11, 12. Such a tabernacling of God on earth, was promised through the prophets. Ezek. 37: 27; 43: 7. The idea may be of something movable, as that in the wilderness—His transient continuance among men in the flesh—for the flesh in which He dwelt here was soon to be glorified and removed to Heaven. ¶ *Among us*. There could be no mistake, for Christ had companied with men, and displayed His Divinity by His miracles, and, in various ways, had daily shown Himself during more than three years. This was abundant proof of His Incarnation. Besides, he showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of the disciples *forty days*, &c. Acts 1. ¶ *We beheld*. See 1 John 1: 1, where John speaks of having *seen* the Word of Life *with his eyes*. The Apostle here refers to the whole manifestation of Christ in the flesh, by His word and works, but more especially to His transfiguration, when they saw Him in His glory—as God-man—when His flesh shone with His proper Divinity—and they saw plainly what glory He had as God, though He was in the flesh. This was a special evidence furnished to Peter, James and John, fortifying them for their special work. "*We beheld*." Peter refers to it as a most convincing and overwhelming

proof of His Godhead. 2 Pet. 1: 16–18. See Matt. 17: 1–9. His "*glory*" was also displayed or *manifested forth*, (ch. 2: 11; 11: 4;) in His miracles, in which His Divine majesty more or less appeared—but His transfiguration was the crowning scene, to which John seems further to refer. It was a visible glory, like that of the *Shekinah* of old at the door of the Tabernacle. He who was "*the true Light*" showed forth His *glory*. The term here used for *beheld* signifies not a mere sight of the eyes, but a close, familiar contemplation. See 1 John 1: 1–4. ¶ *As of the only-begotten*. Such glory—so peculiar—the reflection of the Divine image. On that occasion, on the mount, this testimony of the Father to Christ from Heaven, as His beloved Son, made a strong impression upon these Apostles. Peter says, "We were eye witnesses of His majesty—for He received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." John, in kindred terms, here testifies that they beheld His glory, "*as of the only-begotten of the Father*," &c. The glory which they saw was manifestly that of the only-begotten—according to the special testimony from Heaven. See Acts 1: 21. ¶ *The only-begotten*. This term is used by John alone, as applied to Christ. See vs. 18; ch. 3: 16, 18. 1 John 4: 9. He is the only Son of God in the highest sense beyond all that "children of God" and "sons," so called, can be—for He is in the bosom of the Father, and alone able to declare, or reveal Him, because He is one with Him. Of course, therefore, the term means more than that He was specially dear, or beloved; though in this light He is set forth as the highest idea that can be given to us of the relation. He was "WITH GOD, and WAS GOD." ¶ *Full of*. This connects with the clause—"dwelt among us"—*full of*, &c. This is the way in which He displayed Himself. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should *all fullness dwell*." Col. 1: 19. He was the manifestation of the Divine

15 John <sup>a</sup> bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3. 13, &c.

before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fullness <sup>b</sup> have all we received, and grace for grace.

<sup>b</sup> Jno. 3. 31.

grace to men for their redemption—and also of the Divine truth as connected with grace. “Mercy and truth met together in Him. Righteousness and peace kissed each other.” Ps. 85. The Gospel plan is the exhibition of grace to sinners as consistent with truth. Hence, Christ in all His conduct and works, displayed the grace of God to sinners—healing, pardoning and blessing them, (vs. 16,) bestowing abundant grace: and He vindicated God’s truth and revealed the truth, the will of God for our salvation—as Himself “the way and the truth and the Life.” Ch. 14: 6. So Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would bring forth judgment or salvation unto truth, or *by truth*. Isa. 42: 3. He was always contemplated as accomplishing salvation in perfect consistency with truth and by a clearer revelation of the truth. The isles were to wait for his law. And such a system of grace and truth came by Him, (vs. 17,) as makes the *gospel*, in distinction from the *law* that was given by Moses. OBSERVE—1. Grace without truth would not satisfy the conscience, nor give peace. Truth without grace would only proclaim our just perdition. 2. Christ executes the office of a Prophet in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation. 3. Christ executes the office of a Priest, in His once offering up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

15. *Bare witness*. In vs. 7, John the Baptist, was spoken of as sent for this purpose, to bear witness of Christ, in order that all men, by his means, might believe. Here, accordingly, his testimony is given. ¶ *And cried*. His was “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” Isa. 40: 3. He made open and public proclamation of Christ.

¶ *This was He*. The Evangelist represents the Baptist, as referring back to a previous testimony which he had given, before Christ appeared. So he says “*this was He*,” as though *pointing out* the one of whom he had testified before He came. vs. 26, 27, 30, 33. Of course he gave the testimony in the power of the Spirit, for it was before he thus had recognized Him in the flesh. ¶ *After me*. That is, somewhat *later* than myself. He announced Him as *about to come*. vs. 9. Our Lord appeared about six months later than John. And this was John’s way of announcing his speedy coming. ¶ *Is preferred*. *Has become greater than I*. Has received a greater rank, or dignity. This alludes to what John distinctly declared, that Christ’s ministry should *increase* while he should *decrease*. ch. 3: 30. ¶ *For He was before me*. The term “*was*” here is the same as in vs. 1, and refers plainly to His previous existence before He appeared in the flesh. It expresses an indefinite past. This, therefore, is given as the reason for Christ’s increase and preferment before John—that He *existed* before John—even from Eternity, (vs. 1,) though John *was born* before Christ. Such exalted testimonies of Jesus were given by the Baptist as appears further. ch. 3: 27, &c. This was in the true spirit of his ministry. He was sent for this.

16. *And of His fullness*. The Evangelist had declared, vs. 14, that Jesus was “full of grace and truth,” and now he goes on to testify for himself, and for the disciples generally, that they had all received of His fullness of grace and truth. Eph. 3: 19.—“That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Col. 1: 19.—“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” See Ephes. 3: 17. *In Him dwelleth all the fullness, &c.* He means to say that

17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace <sup>a</sup> and truth came by Jesus Christ.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 85. 10. Ro. 5. 21.

they, (believers,) could speak from experience, more than confirming the Baptist's testimony of Christ's proper and superior rank, as the Eternal Word. (Verse 15 is not a parenthesis, but is the Baptist's testimony in proof of what was said in vs. 14, that Christ had dwelt among men.) All true believers can further confirm this testimony by their experience. John the Evangelist wrote after many churches had been formed, of Jew and Gentile believers, in all the principal cities of the world: after Paul had traveled from Jerusalem to Illyricum and Rome, (Rom. 15: 19,) and the Gospel had gone to remote parts of the Empire. And he gives it as the united witness of believers, that they had received of Christ's fullness of grace and truth—had been made partakers, from His rich treasury, of heavenly benefits. Eph. 1: 23; 3: 19; Col. 1: 19; 2: 9. OBSERVE—Christ Jesus is an inexhaustible resource of all things pertaining to life and godliness. 2 Pet. 1: 3. And we may come boldly to Him, for there is in Him an infinite store of grace for sinners, and of truth also, so that by His knowledge, (the knowledge of Him,) He, (God's righteous servant) justifies many, for He has borne their iniquities. Isa. 53: 11. ¶ *Grace for grace.* Literally, "*Grace instead of grace,*" grace in such abundance as to crowd on in a perpetual flow, like wave upon wave, where one constantly rushes on to take the place of another; or, rather the inward spiritual grace of the new covenant instead of the outward grace of the old. The law under the old covenant was written on the cold tables of stone, uttering its demands and giving no adequate helps. Under the new covenant the law is written in grace on the warm tables of the heart, and *grace* comes *first*, heralding and establishing the truth and securing its fulfilment in us. It first *gives*, then

18 No man hath seen God <sup>b</sup> at any time; the <sup>c</sup> only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of

<sup>b</sup> Ex. 33. 20. 1 Ti. 6. 16. <sup>c</sup> 1 Jno. 4. 9.

*asks.* This is, therefore, *superior* grace—a better covenant—better promises. Heb. 8: 6, 8, 9. We have Lawgiver for Lawgiver—Christ for Moses—Head for Head—the second Adam for the first Adam. And we have *grace for grace.* Hence, the phrase may refer immediately to the new dispensation of grace as in place of the old. "They that are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them." "The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification, are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and perseverance therein to the end."

17. *For.* A reason is here given for this new and superior supply of grace; because Christ and His office work must be understood as far superior to that of Moses. The law (which Moses gave,) is of *works*, and so it is necessarily limited and restricted. But in this dispensation of the Gospel, *grace* is a free flowing stream, always pouring upon us from the fountain. Moses gave the *law*—the Old Testament economy, full of positive regulations and burdensome rites, (Acts 15: 10;) and he was only dispensing it, as a servant in the house. Heb. 3: 5. It rather announced and heralded some better economy as coming. Accordingly grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ, or *became*, as the new and "better covenant, established upon better promises." Heb. 8: 6. The law worketh wrath. Rom. 4: 15. ¶ *Grace and truth.* Literally, *the grace and the truth* emphatically—or in reference to vs. 14, *the grace and the truth* already mentioned. ¶ *By Jesus Christ.* He was Himself the efficient source. The phrase here, "*came by*" is the same as that which

the Father, he hath declared *him*.

¶ 19 And this<sup>a</sup> is the

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 3. 15, &c.

declares that all things *were made by Him*, vs. 3. "The law was not Moses' own. Grace and truth are Christ's own."—*Bengel*. He is the Son in the Father's house, and Moses was the servant. This shows the superiority of the new dispensation to the Old, and of Christ to Moses—though those were good in their place and for their purpose. See Epist. to Hebrews. The great distinction of the new covenant is, that it *reconciles* grace and truth—brings them into perfect harmony. It is what the law could not do, on account of its weakness or impotency by means of our fleshly or depraved nature. Rom. 8: 3. The Gospel by Christ declares His righteousness—that God might be just, and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3: 26.

18. *No man*, &c. See chap. 3: 13. Moses went up to God on Mount Sinai, and communed with Him. But it was amidst clouds and darkness, and fire and tempest; so that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." But Christ, in a very different sense, hath seen God, as *dwelling in His bosom*, and as partner of the Godhead. Moses had nothing to reveal of God, from any essential connexion and relation such as Christ had. So it is said of the Spirit, that, on account of His peculiar, essential relation to the Godhead co-existing in the Trinity with the Father, "He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," (1 Cor. 2: 10.) ¶ *Which is*. The term implies *Essential being*, without relation to time. He does not merely lie upon the Father's bosom for a season. He lives there always. This is the great advantage of Christ over Moses, even for any full revelation of God. "No man hath ascended up into Heaven save He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven." ch. 3: 13. See Heb. 3: 3-6. ¶ *In the bosom*. This expresses, by an oriental figure,

record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

the idea of vs. 1, 2, that the Son was in the closest possible relations with the Father. The guests *reclined* at table in the East, leaning on the left arm. Hence the person on the right hand of the Master of the feast, leaned toward his bosom, and was said to "lean on his breast." ch. 13: 25. John was the beloved disciple who leaned on Jesus's breast. Hence he was the one to ask Him the most momentous questions. ch. 21: 20. John naturally uses these terms to express the most striking idea of Jesus's familiar and full knowledge of the Father, and of His personal communion with Him, making Him the very one, and the only one to reveal Him. None could know the Father, from personal knowledge, as He could. ¶ *Declared him*. From this term in the Greek, we have the word "*exegesis*," in English. He, and He alone, hath revealed Him, or set Him forth. The Son is the Revealer of the Godhead. And the Spirit, too, makes known to the people of God—*within*—the *things of Christ*, (ch. 16: 14,) and the things prepared by the Father for those who love Him, as "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard." 1 Cor. 2: 9. God in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son. Heb. 1: 14.

## § 18. TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO JESUS.—*Bethany beyond Jordan*.

|       |       |       |          |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|       |       |       | 1. 19-34 |

19. *This is*. John the Baptist's *witness* which has just been spoken of, is here given. The word "*record*" is the same as is used in the verb, (vs. 15,) *witnessed*. It is not *written*, but *spoken* testimony. ¶ *The Jews*. John's mention here of the Jews, seems to intimate that they had ceased to be a nation when he wrote, and that the Gentiles are supposed by him to be his readers. His use, however, of this name,

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou <sup>1</sup> that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

<sup>1</sup> or, a prophet.

is usually to designate the *officers* of the Jews—the Sanhedrim—and here the terms, “from Jerusalem,” should be connected with “the Jews,” to signify the Sanhedrim—THE JEWS—the leaders of the Jews who were from Jerusalem. This highest court of the nation were charged with the care of religion—and it was their business to examine into the lawfulness of any prophet’s pretensions. ¶ *Priests and Levites*. These were the two classes employed about the temple service, (Josh. 3: 3,) and they were here sent *officially* to inquire into the pretensions of the new teacher, (vs. 25,) who had gathered such crowds about Him, (Matt. 3: 5,) and had excited public expectation that he might prove the Messiah. Luke 3: 15.

20. *Confessed*. That is, openly and publicly acknowledged—professed. He did not profess to be what he was not. This shows his sincerity. He was very popular and might have claimed to be the Messiah, as Christ had not yet publicly appeared. Among the learned and the unlearned, there were many doubts as to the prophecies about the Messiah. ch. 7: 40–52.

21. *Elias*. This is the Greek way of writing *Elijah*, whom the Jews expected to come down from heaven in person, to anoint the Messiah. The whole appearance of John reminded them of Elias. Matt. 3: 4. 2 Kings 1: 8. He denies that he was Elias in any such sense, though he was personally the Elias prophesied by Malachi, (3: 1, 4, 5,) but that he came “in the

23 He <sup>a</sup> said I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet <sup>b</sup> Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 3: 3. Mar. 1: 3. Lu. 3: 4. c. 3, 23. <sup>b</sup> Is. 40: 3.

spirit and power of Elias,” was the most that could be said. Besides, he announced that the kingdom of God was at hand, and they naturally turned to the last of their prophets for the indications there given. Mal. 4: 5. Lightfoot shows from their Rabbinical teachings that they expected a general purification, or baptism, to be administered by Elias, before the coming of the Messiah. Ezek. 36: 25, 26. Zeck. 13: 1. The conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, opened the true sense of these predictions. ch. 3: 5–10. ¶ *That prophet*. The Jews looked for “one of the old prophets risen again,” to herald the advent of Christ. They differed in their views of the person—but some thought it Jeremiah—some one and some another. Matt. 16: 14. This also he disclaimed. This may refer to that *prophet like unto Moses*, promised. Deut. 18: 15–18. See ch. 6: 14.

22. *An answer*. They came as an official delegation, and they must have some definite report to carry back.

23. *I am the voice*. Here John applies the prophecy of Isaiah to himself, which the Evangelists apply to him. Isa. 40: 3. I am *he* whom Isaiah describes.

24, 25. *The Pharisees*. This seems here thrown in, to explain the question immediately following. The Pharisees, who were so exact and strict about ceremonies, would naturally want to know all about his authority for *baptizing*. They pretended to be the highest authorities on all such ritual points,

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one <sup>a</sup> among you, whom ye know not:

27 He it is, who, coming after me,

<sup>a</sup> Mal. 3. 1.

Hence, while they admitted that Christ would have a right to baptize when he should come—and perhaps, these prophets—they inquired what authority John had, if he was any other than they. The *Sadducees* had no concern about these nice points of ceremony, for they opposed the Pharisees in regard to all such matters.—“Why takest thou upon thee this office of administering baptism, if thou art not able to prove thyself to the Sanhedrim as one or other of the great personages promised to come?” And especially did they ask this with some severity, as he undertook to baptize, not only proselytes, but *Jews*. He had declared who he was, (vs. 23,) and this they should have understood. He had applied to himself the description which Isaiah had given of the Messiah’s forerunner. But they seem not to have understood. This at least would not account to the Pharisees for his baptizing. ¶ *Neither*. If John was neither of these that they had fixed in their minds to expect, they could not regard him as having any right to use the Jewish ceremonies officially. Who could he be?

26. John now explains. His baptism is a mere symbol of the greater baptism which Christ would perform—a mere *forerunner* of that, as he was of Christ Himself. ¶ *There standeth*. This is the more formal announcement of Christ’s presence among them as proclaimed by John—to satisfy them of his near relations to the promised Messiah, and to show that though he was not the Christ whom they looked for, yet, Christ Himself was there among them. He elsewhere further declares, that Christ baptized with the Holy Ghost, &c. ¶ *Ye know not*. The multitude knew not Christ, excepting as John afterwards pointed Him out. The sign at the baptism was not for

is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara <sup>b</sup> beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

<sup>b</sup> Judg. 7. 24.

them, but for John; so that he might make Him known to them.

27. *He it is*. He further sets forth the relations he sustained to the Messiah who had really come. ¶ *Coming after me*. See vs. 15. He it is whom I spake of as coming after me, and about to rank before me. This testimony of John was doubtless delivered often, and in different terms and circumstances. It will be observed that this was *after* Christ’s baptism, when John had already *recognized* Him; and that the testimony in Luke (3: 16,) was given *before* the baptism, and accordingly, in the latter, he uses the term “*There cometh*.” Christ was known as *the comer*—“He that cometh” as predicted. The Hebrew name of God in the Old Testament, (“Jehovah,”) is supposed by some to mean “*He shall be*”—as the promised Redeemer—the one that was to come. ¶ *Shoe’s latchet*. *Shoe-string*. The people of the East wore only the sole of a shoe, bound fast to the foot by strings passed over and around it. This was more pleasant for hot countries. But it was the work of lowest servants to stoop and untie this sandal. See Plate, Luke 10: 34, vol. 1, p. 200. This shows us John’s true humility. Though crowds were attending upon him, he took no honor to himself except that of pointing out his Master, and urging all to follow Him. There is no higher honor than this for any ministers or disciples of Christ.

28. *Bethabara*. The manuscripts favor the reading of *Bethany*. The ancient interpreters have it *Bethabara*, which may have been only another name for the Bethany here referred to. *Bethabara* means a *place of passing over*—and Bethany means a *place of shipping*. ¶ *Beyond Jordan*. That is on the east side of the river, but upon the river;

29 The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb <sup>a</sup> of God, which <sup>1</sup> taketh away the sin of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 12. 3. Is. 53. 7, 11. Re. 5. 6. 1 or, *beareth*, He. 9. 38. <sup>b</sup> Ac. 13. 39. 1 Pe. 2. 24. Re. 1. 5.

29. *The next day.* The day after the delegation of the Jews inquired of John. This was just after Christ's return from the temptation in the wilderness, that they came to him. ¶ *The Lamb.* The question is, what reference John could have had in the use of this name. A lamb was killed and eaten, in commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Christ was predicted by Isaiah as a *lamb* led to the slaughter, (53: 7,) who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." And here accordingly He is announced as bearing or taking away the sins of the world. This bearing of sin, is a Hebrew idiom frequent in the Old Testament, and signifying, to remove the (guilt or) penalty of sin by expiation. Levit. 10: 17. Ex. 34: 7. Num. 14: 18. The prophecy in Isaiah was applied to the Messiah by early Jewish commentators. And this idea of taking away sin, by bearing it, or suffering on account of it, so as to expiate it, was conveyed in the Jewish sacrifices and must have become familiar to the people. A lamb was offered morning and evening in the temple-worship, to keep up this great idea. He, *our Passover*, or Paschal Lamb, was sacrificed for us. 1 Cor. 5: 7. ¶ *Of God.* Jesus Christ was God's Lamb, as the sacrifice provided by God, (ch. 3: 16,) and accepted by the Father as a satisfaction for sin, according to the plan of grace. It was not any private offering like the lamb which any sinner brought to the altar. But it was God's unblemished offering furnished by His Infinite Love "to take away sin, and in Him is no sin." 1 John 3: 5. ¶ *Taketh away.* John the Baptist was inspired so to announce Jesus, in language thus strikingly expressing His mediatorial office, as a Priest—our

preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

Great High Priest. He was what all the bloody sacrifices typified, as Paul has clearly shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The sacrificial lamb which bears the sin, also takes it away. There is no bearing of sin as mediator, without removing it. This cannot be done by mere teaching—nor even by Christ as a teacher, but only by Christ as "our Passover," (ch. 3: 1-16,) whose blood must be sprinkled on our conscience. The doctrine of *substitution*, that is, of one's punishment endured by *another*, was clearly taught in the Old Testament. This is the light in which Isaiah sets forth the suffering Messiah, "He was wounded for our transgressions," &c., (ch. 53, throughout.) See Ezek. 13: 5; 22: 30. Isa. 64: 7; 106: 23. John therefore means to say, Behold the sacrificial Lamb—the great appointed sacrifice prepared by God, predicted and brought forward by Him, to bear the sin of the world. The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquities of us all: by His sufferings and death, to remove the punishment of sin—by taking it, to take it away. ¶ *Of the world.* The Old Testament often refers to the Messiah's work as extending to the Gentiles. So Simeon understood that it was not for Jews alone. Luke 2: 31, 32.

30. *This is He*, &c. He points to Him as the very one of whom he had spoken *before the baptism*, as *to come*, and whom he had represented as superior to himself. Matt. 3: 11, 12, 13. Now he repeats the terms of the announcement, implying that this personage who had come according to the description, would answer to these particulars.

31. *I knew Him not.* This may read "*I also*, (referring to vs. 26,) knew Him not." That is, he knew Him not,

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining <sup>a</sup> on him, the same is he

a c. 3. 34.

as he was to know Him certainly by an appointed sign. vs. 33. John was sent to make Him publicly known, and He was to be made known to John, beyond any mistake. This was according to the testimony which John gave *before the baptism*, as to his relations to Christ. He was enabled to recognize Christ when He applied to be baptized by him, and He was revealed to him on the occasion, by this sign from heaven. He knew Him not, so as to make any collusion or conspiracy between them possible. It would seem from Matt. 3: 14, that John knew Christ when He came to him for baptism, but knew Him not yet by revelation, as was appointed. vs. 32.

32. This is John's further witness, which more fully explains the foregoing verse. He testified that Christ had been clearly made known to him from heaven—and that therefore he did not base his witness of Christ upon any mere natural, personal acquaintance. He tells the sign which was appointed from heaven by which he should, without fail, recognize Christ—so that it was by this Divine signal, and not by mere personal knowledge, that he could point Him out to Israel. God leaves none of His ministers in the dark, when they are intent upon doing their work, and wait on Him for tokens and directions.

33. This was, of course, a special claim which John had upon the confidence of the Jews, who boasted their belief in Jehovah, that the Messiah was witnessed to from heaven by the

which baptizeth <sup>b</sup> with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

¶ 35 Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

b Ac. 1. 5; 2. 4.

Father's own appointment, and by a Divine token. See Matt. 3: 16.

34. *Bare record.* I have testified, as you know and remember.

§ 19. JESUS GAINS DISCIPLES.—*The Jordan—Galilee?*

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
|       |       |       | 1.35-51. |

35. *Again.* We need not suppose that these disciples were absent the day before, when John pointed out Jesus. But that what he said to the multitude, perhaps, or to a band of disciples the day before, became now more directly applicable to themselves, by their being the only two who were present. So it often is that small audiences are more moved by the preaching, than larger ones. Ministers who preach to few, need not despond. Stormy-day congregations are sometimes the most encouraging on this account. It is not the number addressed, but the number reached and truly affected, that is the great matter. We hear of none moved to embrace Christ the day before, when the address was to *many*. Now that it is to *two*, we find them both moved to seek Jesus. This shows us, too, that preaching should not be general, but particular, so that it should be made to apply to individual cases.

36. *Looking upon.* This term intimates something more than John's seeing Jesus, as before in vs. 29. It is the term that is used of the maid looking upon Peter, closely eyeing him, and of Christ looking upon Peter, which drove him out to weep bitterly, (Mark



37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest<sup>1</sup> thou?

<sup>1</sup> or, *abidest*.

14: 67; Luke 22: 61,) and of Jesus *looking upon* the young man lovingly, (Mark 10: 21,) and *looking upon* sinners, (vs. 43.) John is represented as earnestly looking upon Christ at this time, and thus proclaiming him with effect. Perhaps we should infer that the hearty contemplation of the Saviour by the preacher himself, may be expected ordinarily to be accompanied by a successful exhibition of Him to the hearers.

37. *Followed*. Not as disciples, leaving all, as yet, but rather going after Him, in the way of inquiry, as appears from the verses that follow. We note these as our Lord's *first words* to his first disciples.

38. Jesus here shows His lively interest, anticipating their inquiries, by inquiring after their want. So it is always under the Gospel. Christ is beforehand with us. If any one sets out, takes any step towards Him, he finds already for him in the Gospel, words of grace, leading him along to salvation, inviting him to *come and see*. ¶ *Rabbi*. This term is the Jewish title for *Master*, which they gave to their great men. Matt. 23: 8. Our Lord forbade His disciples to be so called, or to choose such distinctions. John *interprets* the name, reminding us that he wrote after the Jewish polity was destroyed. ¶ *Where dwellest thou*. How natural is it, after knowing of Christ as the atoning Lamb and Saviour, to ask after the place where He dwells. OBSERVE—Christ dwells in His church, in His people, in the ordinances, private as well as public, and in the written word. Here may we find Him at any

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about<sup>2</sup> the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

<sup>2</sup> That was 2 hours before night.

time. They ask for His *lodging place*, as though they wanted to know where to find Him at any time, or rather, perhaps, to know how far He was now going on. Whatever question any inquirer asks of Christ, to know more of Him, of His dwelling, of His way, of His plans, He meets it by the invitation, *Come and see*.

39. This was the common saying of the Jewish Rabbis to their disciples—*Come and see*, let it be explained to you. And with our Lord there was implied a promise, Come, and ye shall see, and experience all that ye seek. See ch. 11: 34; Rev. 6: 1, 3, 5, 7. OBSERVE—1. This foregoing love of Christ has shown itself in His dying for sinners, before we ever took a step, or had a thought about salvation. 2. He is come for this very object, to seek and to save the lost. See the case of Zaccheus. He is seeking us more than we are seeking Him. And if any one has the first rising care for salvation, and the first desire after Christ, it is an evidence that Christ is seeking Him. ¶ *Tenth hour*. So accurately does John give the hour, perhaps to show, in connexion with the foregoing conversation, that it was now towards evening, and that therefore it was asked where Christ lodged, or perhaps to show that this was a memorable occasion, which made the very hour worthy of note to him, as the hour of his first seeking and following after Christ. The tenth hour, in the Jewish calculation, was 4. P. M. John was doubtless the other disciple.

40. *One of the two*. The other is not mentioned. This agrees with the Evangelist's way of introducing himself in

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted,<sup>1</sup> the Christ.

42 And he brought him to

1 or, *the anointed*.

his narratives, and we see no other reason for his keeping back the name, while the particular mention of the hour would signify that he was concerned deeply in the occurrence. We see John's special modesty, as in this case he was one of the very first who had Christ pointed out to him.

41. *He first.* Not (as Alford,) that both went in search of Peter and Andrew first found him. But the *first thing he did*, or the first thing in the morning after visiting Christ at His dwelling, was to go in search of his brother. How natural this, in any true discovery of Christ. The first prompting is to go after near relatives and others, and tell the glad news, "*We have found Christ.*" Or, we may understand the terms as intimating that what Andrew was first to do, namely, to bring "his own brother," that John, "the other disciple," also did, and brought "his own brother" James, and that this accounts for the order of names in the common list of the twelve, the oldest brother being named first of the *first called pairs*. Simon and Andrew, then James and John. OBSERVE—1. How sweet and sacred is this influence of a brother for Christ. 2. A younger brother may even lead the elder to Jesus. Yes! Andrew may even lead the impetuous Peter, and so may the mild and winning John lead James. ¶ *His own brother.* This rather suggests the reason of his making this his first business after finding Christ for himself: to acquaint "*his own brother*" with the cheering fact, and seek to lead him also to Christ. Even Dives, in torment, felt for his five brethren on earth, lest they also come to that dreary abode, and asked Abraham to send them a messenger, even Lazarus, to warn them away from it. Luke 16: 28. If we feel not now for

Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou<sup>a</sup> shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation,<sup>2</sup> A stone.

a Matt. 16. 18. 2 or, *Peter*.

our relatives and others, we may feel for them, as Dives did, when it is too late.

42. *Beheld*, or, literally, *looking upon*—earnestly contemplating him. See vs. 36, notes. Our Lord here intimates that He knew him first and last—that his being now brought to Him by his brother Andrew was nothing so important as his being brought to Him, by the Holy Spirit. That as with Nathanael, (vs. 50,) whom Jesus knew before Philip called him, so He knew Simon before Andrew called him; and indeed knows now, already beforehand, his future character and career. ¶ *Brought him to Jesus.* How natural, how beautiful and how momentous in its results was this Christian act! How blessed is the work of bringing to Christ one earnest, faithful soul—much more one able, influential minister—a missionary—a winner of multitudes of other souls. ¶ *Simon.* Peter was the first fruit of Christ's public ministry, the first one looked out and brought in by one of the future twelve. And it would seem he was the first publicly recognized as a future apostle, by this *new name*. On this account, it may be, that he is frequently mentioned first in the list and spoken of with some distinction, among the twelve. ¶ *Cephas.* This term is Aramaic, and signifies—a stone. His name was *Simon*. Now Christ adds this *new name*, which in Greek is *Peter*. It was a declaration beforehand, of what Peter was to be made in the gospel service, and of what part he was to have in the upbuilding of the early church. He was to have a primary work, in fact, but no primacy in rank. Peter's confession of Christ was the *foundation truth* upon which the church was to be built, (Matt. 16: 18.) See Gal. 2: 9, where *Cephas* is spoken of as a *pillar*,

43 The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses <sup>a</sup> in the law, and the prophets did write,

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 24. 27, 44.

Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, <sup>b</sup> Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, <sup>c</sup> an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

<sup>b</sup> c. 7. 41. <sup>c</sup> Ps. 32. 2. Ro. 2. 28, 29.

but only "*one of the pillars*"—with John and James. John records this case to show Christ's *Divinity* by His foreknowledge and prerogative in thus designating Simon.

43. *The day following. The next day after Peter was so called and designated*—and so it was *the fourth day* after, vs. 19, supposing Peter's naming to have been the day after the visit of Andrew and John. ¶ *Follow me.* Christ here calls him to be a disciple, not an apostle. This is the first instance of His making such a call.

44. *Bethsaida.* There are two places of this name mentioned in the New Testament. One was at the head of the Lake, and was called Bethsaida Julias. This one here mentioned was the town more commonly known, where Christ wrought, and which was denounced, with Capernaum, for its unbelief. Matt. 11: 21. It was on the western side of the Lake. It was a fishing place, probably, but no trace of it can now be found. We made many inquiries in vain.

45. The first thing spoken of, as done by Philip after he was called by our Lord, was this—"he findeth Nathanael." It was the same feeling as in Andrew's case, (vs. 42,) leading him to go after his brother Simon. It is a characteristic of true conversion—this prompt movement to tell to others what a Saviour has been found, and to lead them to the same Jesus. First, we have had shown to us the beautiful instances of individual effort for Christ, as shown in the *family circle*—brothers and younger brothers leading their

elder brothers to Christ, as Andrew and John. Here observe, we have individual effort displayed *outside* of the domestic circle—where friend prevails with friend to come to Jesus. This Nathanael is spoken of (ch. 21: 2,) as of Cana in Galilee, and Jesus was now probably in that vicinity, as in ch. 2: 1, he is mentioned as being there. This case is now given, in which Christ proved Himself to be *Divine*, so clearly as to convince a sincere Jew, by the evidence of His omniscience. The Hebrew name Nathanael answers to the Greek *Theodorus*. It is supposed that Bartholomew, who is found in the list of the twelve, and is named with Philip, was the same with Nathanael, who is not mentioned otherwise in the number. So that Nathanael was *Bartholomew*, which means *the son of Tolmai*. So Peter was *Barjona*. See Matt. 10: 3; Mark 3: 16; Luke 6: 14. ¶ *Moses in the law.* In the first five books of the Old Testament, which were written by Moses, and called "the Law," according to the general division of the Books, Christ is variously referred to: as "the seed of the woman," and as in Balaam's prophecy, (Numbers 24: 17,) where He is called *The Star*. And so, our Lord himself "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets" expounded to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, the things there written concerning Himself. ¶ *The Prophets.* Not—which Moses in the prophets—but which the prophets did write in the prophecies—and Moses wrote in the law. The Old Testament Books were divided into

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him,

Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw <sup>a</sup> thee.

Ps. 139. 1, 2.

"The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms." Isa. 53: 9; 6: 7; Jer. 23: 5, 6; Dan. 9: 24-27; Zechariah 13; Mal. 3. ¶ *Jesus of Nazareth*. It would seem from this, that Philip had had some acquaintance with Jesus before—or that he gives this particular account of Christ's earthly relations, as his mode of proclaiming him to Nathanael, a devout Jew. He knew of Him as residing at Nazareth.

46. *Can there any good thing come, &c.* It has been generally supposed that the notorious wickedness of the place is here referred to. But as Nathanael was a Galilean, we need not suppose that he expressed on his part this kind of contempt, but rather that he referred to the meanness and insignificance of the place, as not likely to give any great personage to the world. Ch. 7: 52; Matt. 2: 53. He alluded, also, to the contempt in which Galilee was held in the popular estimation, and Nazareth was only a small despised town of Galilee. The name Nazarene and Galilean was a name of derision. This was a natural expression. It was a prejudice natural enough to the human heart. It was a feeling of distrust of the person, because of the place from which he sprang. So unreasonable are the objections which many urge against Christ and His gospel. ¶ *Come and see*. This reply was the only way to meet such a false judgment. Every man should examine for himself. His prejudice was not so obstinate as to forbid this fair trial from personal investigation. This is the substance of Christ's invitation to men. Come to me and prove the Gospel true. OBSERVE.—If men will first of all go to Christ and see the gospel plan with all its evidences and fruits—its promises, provisions and hopes—they will find rest to their souls. All their petty prejudices should be laid aside,

and instead of caviling, quering and fault-finding, they should at once go to Christ and SEE.

47. We need not suppose that our Lord had any reference in His remark to this conversation of Nathanael. The plain meaning is that He knew him by a Divine power. ¶ *An Israelite indeed*. One truly or really an Israelite—one who truly answers to that title. It was our Lord's work to pronounce upon character, especially to distinguish the true Israel (vs. 13,) from the nominal. His fan was in His hand, and He was purging His floor and gathering His wheat into His garner. Matt. 3: 12. This man was one of the true sons, or people of God: like Simeon and Anna, waiting for the consolation of Israel like Zacharias and Elizabeth, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. This would seem, indeed, in his reply to Philip, where he speaks of the Messiah as a "*good thing*." He was, at least, ready to hear of Christ. ¶ *No guile*. No hypocrisy—as with the Pharisees—no false profession. See Ps. 15. It is not meant that Nathanael had no sin, but that he was a sincere, honest and pious Jew—and therefore, as was proved, ready to receive Christ. Rom. 2: 28, 29. No guile was in him as was in Jacob, before he wrestled with the angel. Nathanael was found *in prayer*. Therefore, our Lord speaks of him as a specimen of the earnest seekers and prepared pupils that He would have—His own Israel out of the mere external Israel, looking for Him, and coming to Him with readiness to receive His invitation. Thus ought all Israel to be prepared for Him as their Messiah. Not that Nathanael had yet embraced Jesus as the Christ, but he accepts the invitation, Come and see—and soon his prejudice is lost in his happy experience.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou <sup>a</sup> art the Son of God; thou art the King <sup>b</sup> of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 14. 33. <sup>c</sup> 20. 28, 29. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 21. 5; 27. 11.

48. This claim to a thorough knowledge of Nathanael, awakens his inquiry as to *whence* this stranger, whom he never before saw, had learned anything of him—or so much, as now to be telling his acquaintances (as Philip,) about his private character. ¶ *Before that.* Christ always shows Himself beforehand of all human agency for our salvation—more acquainted with us, and with our character and wants than our nearest friends—and knowing all about us before ever we heard of Him, before we ever moved toward Him, and before any one ever moved to lead us to Him. Before we ever heard a sermon, or were spoken to by any one about Christ, He knew all about us, and was more concerned for us than all beside could have been. ¶ *When.* Our Lord now gives an evidence of His Divine knowledge of him. He knew *where he was*, when he thought himself in deepest solitude, and He refers to this on purpose to show His supernatural knowledge. So He did with the Samaritan woman. Ch. 4: 18. He showed His particular acquaintance with her circumstances and history, as He could not have known them but for Divine power. We may suppose that Nathanael was under the fig-tree at prayer or meditation, as was customary among the Jews. So our Lord, Ch. 18: 2; Luke 6: 12.

49. The effect upon Nathanael was similar to that upon the Samaritan woman. It was a proof of Jesus being the Messiah. ¶ *The Son of God.* By this, perhaps, was meant the Messiah, as in Ps. 2: 7; John 11: 27; Matt. 16: 16; Luke 22: 70. ¶ *The king of Israel.* This was another title of the Messiah. It was written on His cross, “The King of the Jews.” John the Bap-

believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven <sup>c</sup> open, and the angels <sup>d</sup> of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

<sup>c</sup> Eze. 1. 1. <sup>d</sup> Ge. 28. 12. Da. 7. 9, 10 Ac. 1. 10, 11.

tist, however, had called Jesus “the Son of God,” (vs. 34,) in his testimony after the baptism, and Nathanael might have referred to this claim set up for Him by John—meaning, “Thou art *the Son of God*,” as is claimed. Nathanael could not yet have understood the mystery of Christ’s Divine nature. But this proof of His Omniscience was indeed enough, when carried home by the Spirit to show that He was God—at least, that He was the Christ. OBSERVE—1. The Gospel of Christ shows the deepest knowledge of our hearts. It is when we see how exactly it is suited to our condition, that we embrace it as Divine. - 2. Christ shows us plainly that He has all along seen us, and followed us up with warnings and messages of love. When we see this and so read His providence, we find Him to be God, and embrace Him as a Personal Saviour. “My Lord and my God.” So Christ called out Zaccheus, by name, before Zaccheus knew Him. Luke 19: 5.

50. Our Lord commends the prompt believing of Nathanael on this simple evidence of His Omniscience. He assures him that he shall witness more abundant tokens of His Divinity. He thus meets his faith with new and larger promises. So it is with every believer till he enters Heaven.

51. *Verily, verily.* Most certainly. This repetition is for emphasis, to show the solemn truth of what is uttered. ¶ *Ye shall see.* This is spoken to all the disciples. ¶ *Heaven open.* The reference here is plainly to Jacob’s ladder, which he saw in vision. Gen. 28: 12. That was an image of the Incarnation and Divinity of our Lord, and of his mediatorial work, which should engage the angels as ministering spirits to the heirs of

## CHAPTER II.

¶ AND the third day there was

salvation. The meaning here is—that they should see Divine glories displayed in His Person and Work, and Heaven should be seen *open*—not any more *shut*—open for the free entrance of sinners—“by a new and living way which Christ hath opened for us through the vail, that is to say, His flesh.” Heb. 10: 20. ¶ *Angels of God.* They are all ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. Heb. 1: 14. They often appeared on commissions from God to His servants under the old economy; to Abraham and Lot, and Daniel: and in the New Testament, they appear to Zacharias, and Mary and John, and to Jesus, once and again. Mark 1: 13; Luke 22: 43; John 5: 4. The Heaven was seen open by Stephen, (Acts 7: 55;) by the three disciples on the Mount, (Matt. 17: 5;) by the disciples who beheld Christ’s ascension. Luke 24: 51; Acts 1: 9. It was no bodily vision promised to Nathanael, but that spiritual apprehension of the heavenly world, and of our Saviour and inheritance there which all believers were to enjoy. 1 Pet. 1: 3, 4, 8; Revelation. ¶ *Ascending*, &c. Christ had brought the heavenly agencies down to earth—the foot of the ladder He was planting here in His earthly mediatorial work. And the angels as ministering spirits should *ascend* upon Him, from His mediation, and *descend* full of blessing for men. Angelic ministries would be opened up to men by Christ’s Incarnation and Death. These heavenly spirits would keep up intercourse with men through Christ as a *ladder* upon which they would travel between heaven and earth. What Jacob saw in dim vision—that they should see in fact. ¶ *Son of Man.* See Dan. 7: 13, 14. This title is never applied to Christ by any but Himself, except in Acts 7: 56, by Stephen, and in Rev. 1: 13 and 14: 14, which are rather citations from Daniel. Christ was found

a marriage in Cana <sup>a</sup> of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

a Jos. 19. 28. c. 4. 46.

in fashion as a man. Phil. 2: 6, 7. OBSERVE—1. Christ may be known by His knowledge of us, of our sins, of our ruin, and only recovery. 2. They who believe from the light they have, will have more light. 3. We enjoy free communication with the heavenly world through Christ alone. Heaven is open to our view, as He has revealed its glories; and it is open to our entrance, as He has made the ladder to it, and is Himself *the way*. Why will not men cease to follow after delusions—after schemes of consulting spirits, and of opening the spiritual world, when Christ is the only ladder and the only door.

## CHAPTER II.

## § 20. THE MARRIAGE AT CANA OF GALILEE.

|       |       |       |          |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|       |       |       | 2. 1-12. |

1. *The third day.* That is, the third after the incident just recorded, viz: the calling of Nathanael; making one whole day only, and parts of two days between that event and the marriage. This was the first public miracle of our Lord, and so it was the first fulfillment of ch. 1: 51. See vs. 41. ¶ *Cana of Galilee.* The small village now called *Kefr Kenna* on the road from Nazareth to Tiberias, has been commonly held to be the same place. We found a modern chapel erected there, and large water pots standing out on the road side. The monks have fixed upon this as the spot, and strive to keep up every appearance of its being the same. But Dr. Robinson has shown that a village called *Kana-el-Jelil*, (the very name “Cana of Galilee,”) about three hours N. E. from Nazareth, is the real spot; that it was in earlier times recognized as the place, and that the same name is given in the Arabic version of the New Testament, as the place where this miracle was wrought. It was the birthplace

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.<sup>a</sup> the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

3 And <sup>b</sup> when they wanted wine, 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman,

<sup>a</sup> He. 13. 4. <sup>b</sup> Ec. 10. 19. Is. 22. 11.

of Nathanael. ch. 21: 2. ¶ *Marriage.* Our Lord prefaces His public ministry by appearing at a marriage, and showing Himself thus differently from John in His social relations. He here confers special honor upon Marriage by His presence, and by working His first public miracle for its guests. He came to dignify and sanction our social ties. He foresaw, says Trench, that some would arise in His church who would despise marriage, or fail to give the Christian family all its honors. And surely He knew of the apostacy whose mark is the "forbidding to marry." 1 Tim. 4: 3. ¶ *The mother of Jesus.* Joseph was most probably dead. He is last mentioned where Christ was sought at the Temple, at twelve years of age. Luke 2: 43.

2. *Was called. Was invited.* The mother of Jesus "was there" uninvited—was there apparently as one of the relatives of the family in whose house the marriage took place. His brothers also seem to have been present in the same way. vs. 12. Jesus and His disciples were particularly invited, as He probably would not have gone without the invitation. Blessed are they who invite the Saviour to their festive circles—and will have Him to honor and sanctify and bless every happy occasion in their house. ¶ *His disciples.* Those, as we suppose, who were named in the last chapter as having lately been called by our Lord, were now invited out of regard to Him. There were the six disciples—Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Nathanael.

3. *When they wanted.* Rather—when the wine had begun to fail. Mary seems to have been so related to the family as to know when the wine was beginning to give out. And she also interests herself at once in the matter, and bespeaks of Him some interference. ¶ *They have no wine.* Lightfoot argues that the wedding was

in the house of Mary, wife of Cleopas, a sister of the mother of Jesus, (ch. 19: 25,) who was also the mother of James and Joses, (elsewhere called the brethren of our Lord? Matt. 27: 56.) Our Lord's mother seems to have had some expectation from all that she saw and heard of Him, that He would display His power for the supply. He may have privately wrought certain wonders in her presence already, but none publicly before this. At the opening of the marriage ceremony among the Jews, the priest took a glass of wine in his hand and said, "Blessed art thou O Lord, our God, King of the universe, the Creator of the fruit of the vine." This was also the prayer at the table. How appropriate then that He should show Himself their Lord God upon their own solemn acknowledgment, by showing that He was the "Creator of the fruit of the vine."

4. His answer here shows that her address to Him was an appeal for help, either by way of His wonderful wisdom, or of His wonder-working power. ¶ *Woman.* This is no term of reproach or contempt, or disrespect. It is the same as He used so tenderly from the cross. ch. 19: 26. This is the term in which He addressed Mary Magdalene—and which the angels had used in addressing her before. Matt. 20: 13-15. It is to be observed that in this answer He intimates that He is no longer to be considered as in subjection to His human parent—but having now entered on His official work, He is to be understood as the Son of God rather than the son of Mary. Compare Matt. 12: 48, 50, and Luke 11: 27, 28. He would show His object to be far higher than a mere gratification of these guests or of herself, indeed—and higher than to produce the mere earthly supply—while yet He will not refuse to work the miracle. ¶ *What have I to do, &c.* This seems to carry

what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the

with it somewhat of repulse. The phrase is used elsewhere in Scripture, and where the impression conveyed is that the speaker has been unseasonably interfered with. Jos. 22: 24; Judges 11: 12; 2 Sam. 16: 10; 19: 22; 1 Kings 17: 18; 2 Kings 3: 12, 13; 2 Chron. 35: 21; Matt. 8: 29; 27: 19; Mark 1: 24. The meaning is not that He would have nothing to do with her—far from it, as appears from what follows. Literally, the phrase is “what to me and thee.” What is there to us in common, seeing I am thy Lord as well as thy Son—the Son of God, as well as the Son of Mary. As regards the miraculous power, what could there be in common between them? Here He must declare His essential independence of her direction. It was only as her Lord that He could do this thing, and here He must disclaim her authority. ¶ *With thee.* That this could not have sounded so harshly to her ear as it may sound to us, is plain from what follows. He gave her to understand that at the proper time He would act—only that His thoughts were not her thoughts, nor His ways her ways. Isa. 55. And so again, He would declare His superiority to her, in His official character and relations. And this was necessary—for His being the son of Mary, was to many minds the evidence that He was not the Son of God. Only as He should be seen to be both, would He be properly understood. She, the fond mother, was to be taught that He was much more than her son. “That which in me works miracles was not born of thee.” OBSERVE.—He has also here shown us how false is that doctrine of the Romish church which makes Mary an object of worship as a mediator between us and the Son. “There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2: 5) How blasphemous is that new article of faith in the Romish

servants, Whatsoever <sup>a</sup> he saith unto you, do *it*.

6 And there were set there six

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 5. 5, 6.

church, that Mary was conceived without sin—placing her on a level with her Lord—and making a goddess of her so as even to throw His Godhead into the shade! ¶ *Mine hour.* Whatever our Lord intended by the fullness of these words, there was a present sense in which they were meant and received. My time for this public manifestation is fixed—is approaching—but it has not yet come. When it comes I shall be ready to prove my Divine nature and commission, and show myself, upon their own acknowledgment, the Lord Jehovah, as being the Creator of the fruit of the vine. OBSERVE.—Christ has come to turn the water of earth into the wine of Heaven. He could as easily have turned stones into bread when Satan challenged Him. But He will do nothing at the suggestion of such—yet He will do all things at the suggestion of love. Nor even at the direction of His earthly mother will He do Divine works, or out of any mere earthly love—for He had a higher relation to Heaven. He was disposed to meet her request, only that there was as yet an obstacle in the Divine plan. *His* hour was not yet come. *His* hour was not *her* hour. *Hers* was when the wine was failing. His was when the fountain was opening. Zach. 13: 1. He had “*wine and milk*” to furnish “without money and without price.” Isa. 55: 1. And His hour is coming when at the marriage supper of the Lamb, He shall furnish new wine in His Father’s kingdom for His redeemed and glorified guests.

5. From this it is plain that his mother understood that he would work the desired supply, and might do it at any moment—that it was only a question of time. This throws light on the sense in which His reply was meant to be understood—as the miracle was soon wrought according to this intimation.



water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill

6. The Evangelist now tells us how there came to be a quantity of water there for a special use, and this was turned into wine. It would make the miracle no less. As they were *water-pots*, they could have had no remains of wine in them. The Rationalists try to understand this miracle as nothing more than the bringing in of a new supply of wine, after the provision was exhausted. Absurd! OBSERVE—Our Lord chooses not here to create out of nothing—but to change one liquid into another, which, nevertheless, was virtually a new creation. Augustine says, “*He made wine at the nuptials, who every year makes it on the vines.*” ¶ *Of stone.* They were of earthen or stone-ware, and were there, *after the manner, or according to the custom of the Jews*, for the “divers washings,” which they practiced at their feasts. Matt. 15: 12. Mark 7: 4. ¶ *Firkins.* If this “firkin” be the same measure as the Jewish *bath*, it would be near eight gallons: some make it thirteen and a half English. And as each pot contained two or three of these, there would be at least, over a hundred gallons in all. This large quantity has been caviled at. But if there had been only a few gallons it might have been charged to some trick, as though it could have been brought in, secretly; or, as though this small supply was unworthy a miracle. Our

the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

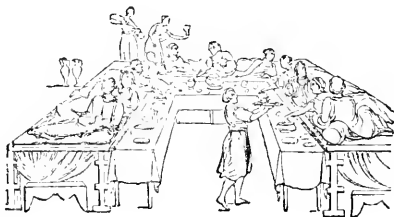
8 And he saith unto them, Draw <sup>a</sup>out now and bear unto the governor <sup>b</sup>of the feast. And they bare *it*.

a Ec. 9. 7. b Ro. 13. 7.

Lord never wrought small miracles—never produced scanty supplies, but always an over-abundance, that, like His provisions of grace, there might be “*enough and to spare.*”

7. The water was poured in *fresh* by the servants, so that there could be no deception. Those who had to do with the vessels, and the contents, would thus be made witnesses to the facts. They could testify most certainly that it was *water*, when they put it in, just before, and that *they* put in the water at His direction. These facts would be most important to verify the miracle. ¶ *To the brim.* To the *top*—brimming full. Every one could see that it was water. It was not a small quantity of something at the bottom of these large vessels. But all was plain and open, to make the miracle more convincing to all.

8. The servants who had just poured in the water, were those who are now directed to draw out the contents. If they found that what they drew out was *wine*, knowing as they did, that what they poured in was *water*, how irresistible was the conclusion, that it had been miraculously changed. This was done, too, *at once*, and without any third party stepping in, to deceive. ¶ *The governor.* This term is used only in this chapter of the New Testament. It means the person (an honored guest,) who presided at the table.



9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the <sup>a</sup> servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set

*a* Ps. 119. 100. *c*. 7. 17.

The tables had three sides, and the ruler of the feast sat, or reclined, at the head, opposite the open space. His was the honored post. There was usually one each at his right and left. At the head the one leaning towards him, on his right hand, (as they all reclined on the left arm,) was said to "*lean on his bosom.*" ch. 13: 23. There were also three persons usually on each of the other two sides of the table. *Becker's Gallus*, p. 473.

9. *Knew not.* This statement calls attention to the fact, that without knowing whence it came, he pronounced it so genuine and superior, and that he could not have conspired with others to deceive. ¶ *Who drew.* Rather, *who had drawn.*

10. *Have well drunk.* This is a general remark with regard to the common practice at feasts—not referring to this feast. It is the remark, too, of the governor, not of our Lord. The simple idea is plain, that men commonly, in serving their guests with wine, bring on the best at first, before they have become satisfied and before they have lost the relish by abundance. This was said to express the opinion of the governor or ruler of the feast, as to the quality of the wine. This is important. He seems to give an independent judgment without reference to the miracle, and probably without knowledge of it. It was of the very best quality, in the opinion of the head of the feast, whose business it was to taste and judge. Our Lord never produced a poor article, but what He made was the best. What He supplies us in our want is never the poor stuff

forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good <sup>b</sup> wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested <sup>c</sup> forth his glory; and his disciples believed <sup>d</sup> on him.

*b* Ps. 104. 15. *Pr.* 9. 2, 5. *c* c. 1. 14. *d* 1 Jno. 5. 13.

that the world gives. ch. 14: 27. And yet, He keeps the best till the last—"the new wine that he shall drink with us in His Father's Kingdom," is "far better." Phil. 1: 23.

11. *This beginning, &c.* This is not a useless statement. Many pretended miracles have been published as wrought by Christ in infancy. This shows that they are false as they are silly, and unworthy of our Lord. ¶ *Manifested forth.* Displayed—made manifest. ¶ *His glory.* This was the glory of which John was writing and which he attempts to testify of, most conclusively, which he says also, that he and others, (Peter and James,) beheld—the glory of the *Incarnate Word*. 1: 14. It was to set forth this glory that Christ wrought this miracle—and for the same purpose now John records it. He declared that it gave powerful manifestation of His glory before the disciples. ¶ *His disciples believed on Him.* This record seems strange. His disciples might be supposed to have already believed on Him. But they were to be taught as well as others. They knew not as yet half that they would soon learn, of Him, or of His works. Our Lord bears with us in our ignorance, takes us by the hand while we know so little, and by many precepts and dealings instructs us more fully, day by day. It is not because we are fully taught, that He takes us into His discipleship, but that *we may be.* Here these disciples saw, as He promised, greater things than the Omniscience displayed in the case of Nathanael. ch. 1: 50. **OBSERVE—**1. The first miracle of Moses was a

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

¶ 13 And the Jews'

passover <sup>a</sup> was at hand, and Jesus <sup>b</sup> went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found <sup>c</sup> in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 12. 14. <sup>b</sup> ver. 23. <sup>c</sup> 5. 1; 6. 4; 11. 55. <sup>c</sup> Matt. 21. 12. Mar. 11. 15. Lu. 19. 45.

turning of water into blood. The law worketh wrath and death. Exod. 7: 20. The first miracle of Christ is a turning of water into wine. The gospel brings its heavenly "*wine and milk*, without money and without price." Isa. 53. 2. Christ comes to supply what we lack, even in our gladdest, most joyous feasts. Our sources of comfort fail, even where we have provided our best, and He comes to create a richer and better supply, when all ours is gone. 3. He can turn our common beverage into the richest—our water into wine. 4. He honors marriage, and blesses the relation. When it is dishonored, society becomes corrupt and debased. 5. He wrought this first public miracle at a marriage, as this is the relation by which He chooses to set forth His love to the church. Eph. 5: 25. 6. Let us call upon Christ in every strait. He can and will supply whatever we truly need. He can bless every place—honor every occasion, and sanctify all the joys and endearments of life. 7. This *wine* was not that fermented liquor which passes now under this name. All who know of the wines then used, will understand rather the unfermented juice of the grape. The present wines of Jerusalem and Lebanon, as we tasted them, were commonly boiled and sweet, without intoxicating qualities such as we here get, in liquors called wines. The boiling prevents the fermentation. Those were esteemed the best wines which were least strong. We may be sure that our Lord's wine would neither be *drugged*, nor *mixed* with deleterious ingredients, but would be *pure*. For *bread* he would give a *stone*, as soon as for *wine* he would give poison. He gives riches that add no *sorrow*.

12. *Capernaum*. This was on the Sea of Galilee, and about ten hours N. from *Cana-el-Jelil*, and of course farther from Jerusalem, where He was next to go. It is said that He "*went down*," not only because it was going away from Jerusalem, but also, towards the Sea. ¶ *His brethren*. See Notes, ch. 7: 5. ¶ *Not many days*. Because the Passover was near, and they went up to attend the feast at Jerusalem. vs. 13.

### PART III.

*Our Lord's First Passover, &c. till the Second.*

¶ 21. AT THE PASSOVER, JESUS DRIVES THE TRADERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE. *Jerusalem*.

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 2. 13-25. |

13. This visit to Jerusalem for the first Passover during His Ministry, is not given by the other Evangelists. This cleansing of the Temple, therefore, is not the same as in Matt. 21: 12. But at the beginning and end of His Ministry, He did this work, that was also symbolical of what was to come, in purifying the church.

14. *The Temple*. This was the court of the Gentiles. The outside area—within which there were three other courts. ¶ *Sold oxen*, &c. This market appears to have sprung up since the captivity, with a view to the convenience of those Jews who came from a distance to provide them with the beasts for offering, and to change their foreign money into the sacred shekel, which alone was allowed to be paid in for the Temple tax. Matt. 17: 24. This would (1,) produce a mixture of sacred and profane transactions, besides, (2,) opening the way for abuses

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold

in the traffic. Perhaps this first cleansing had regard to the former, and the last to the latter of these evils.

15. The Lord had now come to His Temple—even the Angel of the Covenant, and who could abide the day of His coming? This was a hint of what He was to do as Malachi had prophesied of Him. He should be “as a refiner’s fire, and as fuller’s soap.” Mal. 3: 2. His fan was in His hand, as John the Baptist, (the Elias,) had declared, (Matt. 3: 12,) and He would thoroughly purge His floor. The scourge of small cords was rather the emblem of His wrath than the instrument of it. His object was to cleanse the worship and church of God, to “purify the sons of Levi,” and introduce the change predicted in Isa. 66.

16. Some think, that as the doves were sold for the poor, He deals more mildly with those who trafficked in them on this account. But this is not stated. Their object was the same as that of the rest. All the traffickers were driven out. And these were even the worst, perhaps, as they made gain of the poor by keeping up this mercenary traffic in God’s house. Besides, the doves should now be removed, for Christ was Himself come, the one free offering for the poor. The occupation of these traders was gone. And it was more doubly offensive in His Temple, in the face of this one perfect and holy sacrifice, who had come to claim it as His own. In keeping with this, He speaks of His body as the Temple. vs. 19. ¶ *My Father’s House.* He had spoken of the Temple under this name some eighteen years before this. Luke 2: 49. Thus He makes known His claim to be the Messiah, by claiming God for His Father and

doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, <sup>a</sup> The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 69: 9.

by showing this zeal for His house. Thus, also, He shows by what authority He does these things. Matt. 21: 23. Josephus informs us that more than 250,000 victims were offered up at one Passover. ¶ *An house of merchandise.* At the later cleansing He speaks with greater severity, as was fit, in view of their continuance in sin. “Ye have made it a den of thieves.” Matt. 21: 13.

17. *Remembered.* Possibly it was not until after He was risen from the dead, that they remembered this. See vs. 22; comp. ch. 12: 16. This was surely more distinctly and clearly understood by them, when He opened unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The transaction was calculated to bring this passage to mind. The Psalm had in it a reference to the Messiah, which the Holy Spirit would thus afterward bring to view. It is found in Ps. 69: 9. ¶ *The zeal.* Jealousy, intense devotion to the House of God is here meant—ardent zeal for the purification of religion and its sacred institutions. ¶ *Eaten me up.* Consumed, devoured me; swallowed up my desire and passions, and absorbed my energies. The Prophet Isaiah sees the Messiah “clothed with zeal as with a cloak,” going forth to vengeance, punishing the rebellious, and introducing a glorious change in the condition of His Church. Isa. 59: 17, 18.

18. This agrees with the demand which they afterwards made upon Him at the second cleansing. See Matt. 21. They required to know, by miracle, His authority for such a proceeding, according to His claim which He hints of in vs. 16, that the Temple was His Father’s House, and He, of

said unto him, What sign <sup>a</sup> shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy <sup>b</sup> this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 12. 38, &c. <sup>c</sup> 6. 30. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 26. 61; 27, 40.

course, the Son of God. See Notes on Matt. 21: 23.

19. *Destroy*. This is the wonderful sign given. It is, of course, no command. It is as much as to say, you may destroy it, (as you will,) &c. Or it is hypothetical—"if you destroy this Temple." The construction would then be the same as in Matt. 12: 23. Or, He may be understood as saying, "Go on to destroy it," like the passage in which the Prophet is charged to go on to do what was foreseen would be the fruit of His mission. Isa. 6: 10. "Make the heart of this people fat." His death and resurrection were to be a sign to them, just as elsewhere he terms it "the sign of Jonas the Prophet." ¶ *This Temple*. From vs. 21 it is plain that He spake of His death and resurrection which He so fully foreknew. Yet the language was most proper. In the Incarnation, the human body of Christ became the dwelling of God in the flesh, and thus it took the place of the old Temple, and showed the true sense of the Sanctuary (*naos*,) under the old economy. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily,"—*in the body*. Coloss. 2: 9. The Temple was truly glorious only as the residence of Jehovah, and His visible seat. 2 Chron. 36: 15; Ps. 76: 2. Now His body was the most glorious earthly dwelling of Jehovah. Ch. 1: 14. So the Christian Church is now His body on earth, and the true Christian Church is to be His cleansed Temple. It is, then, as though He had said, "Destroy this body which is now the proper sanctuary, or holy place, as the dwelling of God among men, and in three days I will raise it again." The language was to be remembered

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple <sup>c</sup> of his body.

<sup>c</sup> Ep. 2. 21, 22. Col. 2. 9. He. 8. 2.

afterwards, and interpreted by the event. vs. 22. ¶ *I will raise it*. This Omnipotent act of resurrection is here spoken of as performed by Christ Himself. This is also declared in ch. 10: 18. See ch. 6: 39, 40, 44; Matt. 12: 38, 39. This language was also made the ground of accusation against our Lord at His trial, as the other Evangelists have noted, though they have not recorded the circumstances in which it was spoken by our Lord. John, therefore, narrates this very important conversation, so that we can see the sense in which it was spoken, and the falsity of the charge which they founded upon it. See Matt. 26: 61; 27: 40.

20. This temple, restored and beautified by Herod the Great from the second temple of Zerubbabel, was begun in the eighteenth year of his reign, (Joseph Ant. XV. 11. 1,) reckoning from the death of Antigonus. This would be sixteen years before the birth of Christ, or twenty before our era. And counting thirty years after that for our Lord's age at this time, we have forty-six years. But the temple was not yet finished, and the meaning is that this structure was already so many years in the course of building. When this saying was brought up against Him by the false witnesses, (Matt. 26: 61,) their falsity consisted in putting a different sense to His Words, and really altering them also, so as to make quite a different meaning, "*I am able to destroy*," &c., representing Him as an enemy of the temple, and some added, that "He would raise another, *built without hands*."

21. *But He spake*, &c. They were blind to any but the most carnal and false meaning. He meant to say what would soon be understood by His dis-

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered <sup>a</sup> that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem, at the passover, in the feast *day*,

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 24. 8.

ciples, namely: that His body was Jehovah's Temple, and that this would come to pass respecting it.

22. *The scripture.* That is, the Old Testament scripture. The Holy Spirit in the New Testament alludes to Christ's resurrection as taught in the Old Testament, and this is our best authority, though we may not see it as fully as it is taught. See ch. 20: 9; Luke 24: 26, 27; 1 Cor. 15: 4; comp. Ps. 16: 2, 7; Hosea 6: 2; comp. Acts 2: 27-32; 13: 35-37; Isa. 26: 19: "Thy dead men shall live—with my dead body shall they arise." The Holy Spirit brought to view the spiritual sense of Old Testament passages, especially "taking the things of Christ (in them) and showing them unto them." ¶ *The word.* They saw, (1,) the meaning of such passages on this subject as they had not understood before, and, (2,) they saw the truth of His prediction as it was interpreted and made clear by the event. See Matt. 20: 19; Luke 18: 32, 33. **OBSERVE**—God will show the truth of all His prophecies and promises, by the fulfillment. 2. One fulfillment should strengthen our faith for another, and confirm our confidence in all God's word. 3. We ought to treasure up the words of scripture, so as to be able to recognize their truth when they come to pass. 4. Children are to be taught the scripture, though they may not yet fully understand it; that they may be brought to remember the sacred words and believe. Often these passages have been brought to mind by God's Spirit, with power; and wayward youth who have been taught God's word, in childhood, have remembered the scripture, under some deal-

many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he <sup>b</sup> knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sa. 16. 7. 1 Ch. 28. 9; 29. 17. Je. 17. 9, 10. Matt. 9. 4. ch. 16. 30. Ac. 1. 24. Re. 2. 23.

ing of His hand and by the working of the Spirit, and have *believed*.

23. *The feast.* The Passover feast lasted eight days. ¶ *Many believed in His name.* In His authority and mission as the Messiah from beholding the miracles, which He did. It would seem from this, that He wrought some miracles which are not recorded here.

24. *Did not commit Himself.* Literally—Did not trust Himself to them—did not believe in them, because He knew them inwardly and knew that this believing from the evidence of miracles alone, was only from an outward constraint. They more truly believe who are led by His teachings beyond all the evidence of miracles, as Nicodemus.

25. *Needed not.* This is here declared by the Evangelist as already the substance of his observation. Nathanael believed in Christ on account of his own experience of His being the searcher of hearts, and knowing what is in man. 1: 48, 49. See also ch. 5: 42; 6: 64; Matt. 9: 4. This testimony of the Evangelist is thrown in as a kind of summing up thus far, of the evidence given to His essential Godhead. **OBSERVE**—"The Lord knoweth them that are His"—and this is the great truth on the seal of the foundation of God, in His church. 2 Tim. 2: 19. He distinguishes mere outside or intellectual belief, from an inward and hearty reliance. See ch. 21: 17. "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." It is well if each professor of Christ can say this. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," and prove his faith by

## CHAPTER III.

¶ THERE was a man  
of the Pharisees,

a c. 7. 50, 51. c. 19. 39.

his works. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace," &c.

## CHAPTER III.

§ 22. OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE WITH  
NICODEMUS.—*Jerusalem.*

|       |       |       |          |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|       |       |       | 3. 1-21. |

An instance is now given of such a believer as is mentioned in ch. 2: 23—one who was convinced by the miracles which Christ wrought, and who went so far as to conclude that God must needs be with Him, (vs. 2,) but who, from what follows, is shown to have had the greatest ignorance of Divine things, and an utter inexperience of the *new birth*. The result is not here mentioned. But from the notice made of him, (ch. 7: 50, and 19: 39,) we infer that he was led to embrace the Gospel by this interview. OBSERVE. How a man may be convinced of Christ's Divine mission, and of His Divine Person, and not know anything of true conversion. He lacks the great saving change. This interview occurred during our Lord's brief sojourn at Jerusalem, at this first Passover of His Ministry. Christ is here presented as opening to a Jewish Rabbi, the spiritual doctrine of His kingdom, as so different from the false notions of the Jews, generally. This accords with John's object, which is to set forth the proper Godhead and Messiahship of Jesus.

1. *A Ruler.* He was a member of the Sanhedrim, the chief council and court of the nation. ch. 1. 19.

2. *By night.* This was for fear of being cast out of the synagogue, (ch. 12: 42,) and perhaps, also on account of his own doubts he had not yet the firm faith which led him afterwards to defend Christ, (ch. 7: 50, 51,) and to bring a load of spices to embalm

named Nicodemus, \* a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by

the dead body of our Lord. ch. 19: 39. It is supposed that the interview was between Nicodemus and Christ *alone*. But John may also have been present. And if he was not, there is no difficulty, as the Holy Spirit revealed to John this important conversation, as promised. ch. 16: 13, 15. Our Lord Himself could have told it to the beloved disciple if it were needful.

¶ *We know.* He seems to have spoken not only for himself but for others, such perhaps as Joseph of Arimathea, and the class of Jews who received Christ, and to whom He gave the privilege to become the sons of God. ch. 1: 12. ¶ *A Teacher.* He was ready to recognize Christ as a teacher, but not further as a King, nor even as a Prophet, for declaring the Divine will, but only as an instructor Divinely sent and as perhaps able to tell something about the kingdom of the Messiah which was so earnestly looked for, at that time. This was not the idea which the Jewish Scriptures gave of the Messiah, as Nicodemus must have well known. There are those who would regard Christ as only a great moral instructor come to teach the virtues, and to be a pattern of them, and nothing more. ¶ *Come from God.* The term here used refers to Christ as He *who was to come*, and is thus commonly used in the New Testament. ¶ *For no man.* Nicodemus inferred that Jesus was divinely commissioned, from the miracles which He wrought at Jerusalem. ch. 2: 23. Many others believed for the same reason. Miracles were promised to the twelve as a proof of their divine commission, (Mark 16: 17,) and so the apostles claimed to be believed on this ground, as Paul, Rom. 15: 11. The presumption is, that God would not give miraculous powers to any false teachers—and we may be sure that a genuine miracle will never accompany error. There

night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for <sup>a</sup> no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except <sup>b</sup> God be with him.

a c. 9. 16, 33. Ac. 2. 22. b Ac. 10. 38.

may be gross impostures—like the pretended Romish miracles which are childish, winking pictures, &c.—or, there may be shrewd counterfeits of divine miracles, which Satan himself may aid. But if the *work* is certainly of God, and such as could be wrought only by omnipotent power, the word will be such also—though no marvelous work could possibly prove falsehood to be truth. Hence, our Lord appeals directly to His miraculous works as the sufficient proof of His Divine authority. ch. 15: 24; 10: 25, 38. The people called for such proof. ch. 6: 30. The principle was insisted on. ch. 9: 29–33. Some hold that the miracle did not prove the divine authority of the person who wrought it, but only claimed for him a hearing, and that it must be judged from the doctrine which was to be established by the miracle, whether it was wrought of God, or of Satan: and that this principle is referred to, ch. 9: 29. But it does not appear that the objectors had any such right ground to stand upon—and we see that Nicodemus was convinced by Christ's miracles that He was from God before he knew of His doctrine.

3. Our Lord waits for no inquiry. This confession is enough. He at once replies against this serious mistake so fatal to all true piety. ¶ *Verily, verily.* This is the form of introducing the most solemn discourse. He tells him that it is not *learning*, but *life*, that is necessary for entrance to the Messiah's kingdom—and *life* must begin by *birth*, and if Nicodemus will now receive Him as a Teacher, indeed, he must be taught this truth—first of all. “My teaching is not of *doing* and of *leaving undone*, but of a change in the man—not of *new works*, merely, but of a *new man* to do them—not of a new life only,

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, <sup>c</sup> Except a man be born <sup>1</sup> again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

c c. 1. 13. Ga. 6. 15. Ep. 2. 1. Tit. 3. 5. Ja. 1. 18. 1 Pe. 1. 23. 1 Jno. 2. 29; 3. 9. 1 or, from above.

but of a *new birth*.” ¶ *Except a man.* This solemn declaration includes every man—Jew and Gentile. Our Lord could not make Nicodemus an exception. His being a Jew, or a ruler—a member of the Sanhedrim—or his being rich, could make no difference. This truth was meant to embrace all men, and every man is included in it. ¶ *Born again.* This phrase, as will be seen, was used to introduce Nicodemus to the true spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and by means of the terms and customs in use among the Jews, to open to him the higher sense. The Jews called those proselytes *new-born*, who were received by baptism into their church—into the Messiah's kingdom, as they claimed their church to be. But how infinitely below the true requirement was this! The true *regeneration* lies not in any outward ordinance—in any boasted rite, as our Lord will explain to this Jewish Rabbi. It is a *new birth*, indeed. Our first and natural birth was corrupt. We were conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. Ps. 51. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Rom. 8: 7. “By nature children of wrath, even as others.” Eph. 2: 3. We need a different birth. We are dead by nature. We can be alive only by being born again. Nicodemus thought only of a mere outside form of connection with a corrupt and formal church. In order to have any sight or experience of Christ's kingdom, the heart must be changed, and not merely the outward church relation. And this is a work which none but God can do. It is called a new creation. 2 Cor. 5: 17. It is a new life and being. That the birth of the inner man is here meant—a new and more important beginning of life, beyond the birth of the natural man—is plain from the connexion. The term



4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water <sup>a</sup> and of the Spirit, <sup>b</sup> he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

<sup>a</sup> Mar. 16. 16. Ac. 2. 38. <sup>b</sup> Ro. 8. 2. 1 Co. 2. 12.

here rendered *again* is used twelve times in the New Testament, in five of which cases it means "*from above.*" Hence, this is regarded by many as the true meaning here. In Luke 1: 1, it is translated "*from the very beginning,*" in which sense it would express here the thoroughness of the change called regeneration. The word had no double meaning in the language which our Lord used. And Nicodemus plainly understood it as meaning *again*—a second birth. The old Syriac version renders it *ancw*. ¶ *Carnot*. Literally—*is not able*. Instead of being new-born in the Jewish sense, *by* entering into the church, our Lord shows how one must be new-born *in order* to enter into His gospel church or kingdom. ¶ *See*. Experience, attain to, or have any experimental sense of it. OBSERVE.—This is nothing arbitrary with God. It is in the nature of things impossible for a man unrenewed to enter Christ's kingdom. He is not able to see it. ¶ *Kingdom of God*. This phrase in the New Testament is taken from the prediction in Dan. 2: 44.

4. It is not likely that this man was so utterly ignorant of our Lord's meaning as to suppose that he was speaking of a literal second birth of nature. The general idea of a new birth was already in use, as proselytes were spoken of as *new born*, when they came into the Jewish Church by baptism. And our Lord here gives the deeper, more important sense in which a new birth was necessary for coming into the church of the Messiah, that is, for being His true disciples and members. Nicodemus understood the term only as applied to proselytes entering the Jewish Church. But how it could apply to the Jews, and be made a prerequisite for entering the Messiah's kingdom, he could not see.

Indeed, it seemed to him just as absurd as to think of a man when he is old, (already born and advanced in age,) entering again into his mother's womb, and being born. as for a Jew already in the church, the true and only church, going back to enter the church for the first. Our Lord, therefore, more fully explains. Beyond the form, is the inward reality which is the great requisite, and without which the form is only an empty sign and shadow.

5. Some understand the water to refer to the ceremony of sprinkling with *pure water*, mixed with the ashes of the heifer, (Numb. 19: 7-10,) or with the blood of the leper's bird, (Levit. 14: 50, 52,) as applying the benefits of the vicarious sacrifice. In this case the water would be "*the water of purifying,*" as representing the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood. This would make the two terms here express the double cleansing, of Christ's blood, and of the Spirit's influence, as shown in justification and in regeneration together. 1 John 1: 7; 5: 6, 8. *Guthrie's Ezekiel*. ¶ *Of water and of the Spirit*. Baptism was the outward sign of embracing this religion of Christ, the act of public profession, as adults were addressed. Hence men were summoned to be *baptized*. This was not, surely, for any virtue in the baptism, but for what it signified. In such as Simon Magus, it was of no benefit. Acts 8: 13, 23. To guard this, therefore, it is added, "*and of the Spirit,*" which is the great essential requisite. And as John's baptism was only with water, and Christ's was with the Holy Ghost, (which the water only signified,) this baptism of the Spirit was the great vital matter. John's announcement of Christ explains this language. "*Of water, and of the Spirit,*" without which the water is nought. Or—of water,

6 That <sup>a</sup> which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born <sup>1</sup> again.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Co. 15. 47-49. 2 Co. 5. 17. 1 or, from above.

even of the Spirit, which the water-baptism signifies and sets forth, but cannot give. "He connects the water and the Spirit, because under that visible symbol, He attests and seals that newness of life which God alone produces in us by His Spirit."—*Calvin*. So in the further explanation, vs. 6 and 8, the water is not named, and only the birth of the *Spirit* is mentioned, as the essential energy which the water itself represents. Here Christ points to baptism, as performed by John and by Himself, (through His disciples,) and points beyond it to the new spiritual birth which is signified as indispensable, and which Christ came to bestow. This had been set forth under the Old Testament as a spiritual baptism, to be outpoured upon the church in the Messiah's time. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," &c. Ezek. 36: 25. Therefore, Nicodemus should have understood it. The quickening had been prefigured as a raising to life of *dry bones*. Ezek. 37. It should not have been so utterly strange then to this Master in Israel. vs. 10. Our Lord, in this discourse, will illustrate what had been declared. ch. 1: 17. ¶ *Enter into*:—practically. The Kingdom, in vs. 3, relates more to experimental acquaintance. Here, beyond this, the reference is to practical living.

6. *That which is born*. Our Lord here declares the general principle to show how impossible it would be, by any natural birth, such as Nicodemus speaks of, to be born of the Spirit. It would be only twice born in sin. And so, He shows that true believers are "born not of *flesh*, (see Gen. 8: 21,) but of *God*," vs. 13. Like begets like. A lion begets a lion, and not a lamb. "Who can bring a clean thing out of unclean? Not one."—*Job*. Only

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so <sup>b</sup> is every one that is born of the Spirit.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Co. 2. 11.

the Spirit of God can create a new spirit in us. Ps. 51; Eph. 2: 3; Rom. 5: 17, 18. See 2 Cor. 5: 17, &c. No one by natural birth has the right of citizenship in the Messiah's Kingdom. Eph. 2: 19. This general declaration would also teach Nicodemus that it is not a birth of *bloods*," (vs. 13,) as the boasted descent from Abraham, which could give them membership in His kingdom.

7. *Ye must be*. Our Lord Himself was born in the flesh, but not properly of the flesh. He took our infirmities upon Him, as Mediator, yet He was "without sin"—"knew no sin." The term here for *must*, is literally, *It is necessary* that ye be born again. It is used by John to express the necessity which there is according to the divine plan: though as we see from the term, vs. 3, it is also in the nature of things, *impossible* to belong to the true kingdom of Christ, without the new birth. He must exercise towards us the office of a King, in subduing us to Himself.

8. Wonder not, or do not marvel at this doctrine of a new birth by the Spirit, for there are mysteries also in the natural world. How absurd that men should complain of mysteries nowhere but in religion, when they are equally to be found everywhere in nature. Mysteries of wind, weather and climate they do not disbelieve because they cannot understand them. They rather suit themselves to the case. ¶ *The wind*. This illustration is taken, because the same word in the Greek and in the Hebrew, means *wind* and *spirit*, and is used for the Spirit of God. It means the gentle wind, silent and mysterious. As in the Old Testament, also, both meanings belonged to the same word, Nicodemus ought not to be a stranger to such a sense of the term. The He-

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

brew word means breath, wind, spirit, and is used in the title, "Spirit of God." Gen. 1. So in the vision of dry bones, the Prophet was commanded to prophesy unto the wind, and say to the wind, "Come from the four winds, *O breath, and breathe* upon these slain, that they may live." Ezek. 37. So also at Pentecost, the Spirit came "as the sound of a rushing mighty wind." Acts 2: 2. ¶ *Listeth—willeth*. As the summer breeze bloweth where it pleaseth, that is, not regulated or controlled by man, so the Spirit is God's "free Spirit," dividing as he will. 1 Cor. 12: 11. Yet, though all gracious influence is of God's free pleasure, He has appointed to hear prayer, and he who seeks shall find, and more freely than parents give good gifts to their children, will He give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Luke 11: 13. Dr. Brown understands the term throughout to mean Spirit, and not wind at all, and he renders it, "The Spirit breathes where He will, in inspiration, and you do not know the reason or manner of His beginning or closing the work, but you observe its effects. You know His voice, the revelation. So in the work of regeneration. He gives no account but by the effects." But the common understanding of it is better. ¶ *Thou hearest*. So is the mysterious work of the Spirit. We cannot trace it out in its secret plans and courses, any more than we can trace the wind that sweeps by us now, to the first impulse which the air ever received. Philosophers tell us that a mere lifting of the hand causes vibrations in the air which never end. How can we calculate, then, how the wind that blows upon us to-day has been caused in connexion with ten thousand secret influences? We can know of it only as we see its effects. So, also, we cannot dictate the time and manner of the Spirit's working. It is neither confined to ordinances of a certain

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

pale, nor is it produced by human devices and schemes.

9. Nicodemus here inquired into the reason of the matter, how these things could be. But if he could not understand plain matters of fact which he could see, how should he comprehend things far above him, which he could not see? He could not understand how any such radical change could be necessary for a Jew, in order to share the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, which, he supposed, the Jewish nation was entitled to. OBSERVE—1. Many persons think that if they have been born in the church, and learned the Catechism, &c., they do not need any special change. Or, they think they are regenerated thus. 2. Many stop to ask *how* this and that can be, instead of believing God's work, and receiving His provisions and promises. "Observe (says an early writer,) when a man trusts spiritual things to reasonings of his own, how ridiculously he talks."

10. *A master*. Art thou such an one as claims to be a teacher of Israel, a Rabbi, and art yet ignorant of these things. Nicodemus was one of the chief doctors in Israel. Besides he alone, of them all, had come to Christ to learn of Him. They had required a *sign*, some wonder-working of Christ, to prove His authority in such summary clearing out of the temple courts. ch. 2: 18. After rejecting their demand by indicating a sign full of mystery to them, (ch. 2: 19,) we find that He wrought miracles in Jerusalem, which led many to believe, (ch. 2: 23,) though this was not the trustworthy faith, (ch. 2: 24,) and Nicodemus came forward secretly with his testimony only so far as this—and we see how, as he came by night, so he was yet *benighted*. Now, however he had come into contact with the true Light of Life. Well did he act his part afterwards when he defended our

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, <sup>a</sup> We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

a 1 Jno. 1. 1-3.

Lord's opinion, (ch. 7: 50,) and His deed (ch. 19: 39,) in both which places mention is made by the Evangelist of this interview. Nicodemus should have known these things from the Old Testament. He was a Rabbi, and the Spirit spake by David and all the prophets, and all the Old Testament scriptures about this Kingdom, and its spiritual nature. Like Simeon and Anna, he should have recognized Christ when He came—and should have understood His offices. This spiritual change to be wrought upon Israel, had been spoken of. Jer. 31: 31-33. Ezek. 18: 31; 36: 26. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, treats of such as he. Rom. 2: 17, 19, 20.

11. Our Lord now replies to his unbelief, (vs. 9,) and shows the need of faith in Him. ¶ *We speak.* Here He includes the Spirit as speaking with Himself, (Heb. 1: 1,) by the prophets and in His word. Or more, as in ch. 8: 16-18, He refers to the double testimony of the Father and of Himself. This would allude to the miraculous works in which the Father bare witness, with and to the Son. See ch. 8: 26, 28, 38, 40; ch. 15: 15. So also He addresses Nicodemus as representing the Jewish people, for indeed He came speaking in the plural, as if for others also. ¶ *That we do know.* The truth that we know and are positively, personally sure of, we testify to you. You have come professedly to be instructed by me, and call me Rabbi, and a Divine teacher. And now when I tell you the truth that I perfectly know—the most important truth, which I have the most perfect assurance of, you do not receive it. See I John 1: 1. Every preacher and teacher of the Gospel can claim to be listened to, when he can say, “*I know this from my own experience.*” He can come to his people or to his class in the sabbath

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

school, with the message which he has proved in his own case. This will give the truth a greater weight. Nothing is so calculated to influence us, as the testimony of others from their own experience—when they speak most confidently because they have tried for themselves. ¶ *Have seen.* Here our Lord claims to have a most *immediate knowledge* of Divine and Spiritual things. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in Him,” and so Christ and the Spirit are the Persons in the Godhead, by whom God is revealed. 1 Cor. 2: 11; Heb. 1: 1; ch. 1: 18. He who is in the bosom of the Father as *one belonging there*, (see notes,) hath revealed Him, as no mortal could. ¶ *Ye receive not.* Our Lord here declared what was and would be His reception among the Jews as a nation. Hence, this conversation was intended not alone for Nicodemus, but for them all: and for us. How inconsistent and contradictory was it in this man and the people, to reject the testimony which they professed to seek, and the teaching which they acknowledged to be from God. vs. 2. So many pretend to seek religion, and finding that it requires them to give up worldly conformities, and the customs and maxims of the flesh, they reject it. So some enter the church, and finding its rules to restrict evil practices and cross their notions, they turn aside. Faith is the receiving of a witness. It is far above mere reason, as it receives and acts upon a message from God.

12. *If I have told you.* Our Lord here shows the inconsistency of coming to Him for teaching, without a sincere disposition to receive His truth. ¶ *Earthly things.* Already the professed inquirer had stumbled utterly at what might be called the ground work—the *earthly things*—the matters

13 And <sup>a</sup> no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came

a Ep. 4. 9, 10.

about the new birth, which involve personal experience and the great saving change of heart and life, and entering into the earthly kingdom of Christ. These are matters which are of every day concern, and these practical proofs of the religion of Christ, are palpable, and can be everywhere pointed to—the great change which it works upon men and society—how it plainly makes men *new creatures*. And these things, so at hand, and capable of being attested, ought to be received, and received by faith—believed—even though not fully understood, for they are not *contrary to reason*, though sometimes they are *above reason*. ¶ *Heavenly things*. These are the higher mysteries of His Kingdom, the secret counsels of God. If the lower, more plain and practical things were so stumbled at, and not believed, how should the higher truths engage their faith, especially if they adopted the false principle of believing only so far as they could understand. OBSERVE—There are two sides of Gospel truth—the earthly and the heavenly—the lower and the upper side—the revealed things which belong to us, and the secret things which belong to God. Deut. 29: 29. Both sides are presented in the scriptures. Many puzzle themselves about the secret counsels of God in election, and about the mysterious work in regeneration, and do not attend to the plainly revealed way of life. He asked for the *how* of the matter—the philosophy of the operation—when He should have received by faith the clearly revealed truths. OBSERVE—If men reject the “*earthly things*,” the plain, personal truths, of native depravity, corruption of the whole nature and need of renewal by Almighty power, they cannot believe the great, high truths which are built upon these—such as mediation, regeneration, sanctification and the whole plan of redemption by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The whole plan of grace supposes our lost

down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

condition as granted. If men deny that they are *lost*, how can they receive the message of salvation? Only such as own themselves to be sinners, can relish or receive the salvation for sinners which is in the gospel.

13. *And no man*. This agrees with the passage, ch. 1: 18. “No man hath seen God at any time,” &c. Our Lord had just declared that a knowledge of these earthly and heavenly things, and a believing reception of them as taught by Him, were essential. And now He declares that if they reject them as conveyed by Him, they could not get them from any other source—because no man had gone up to heaven for the purpose of revealing these things, nor so as to be qualified for teaching them, for none had returned for this—neither Enoch, nor Moses, nor Elijah. ¶ *But He*. It is not meant, of course, that Christ had ascended up to heaven, but that He alone is able to teach these things, as no mortal had gone up thither for this, and as none could pry into the secrets of the Father’s bosom; but He who came down from Heaven could alone reveal these things—and He was the Son of Man, who belongs always essentially to heaven, so that His Incarnation did not remove Him entirely, nor cut off His connexions there. ¶ *Which is in heaven*. This wonderful Personage so united Divinity and Humanity, as to be on earth and in heaven at the same time. This phrase,—“The Son of Man which is in Heaven,” expresses the great truth that Jesus belonged to heaven—came from heaven and was destined to return thither, and even then, while on earth, held his place and relationship there. “Christ, therefore, who is in heaven, hath clothed himself with our flesh, that by stretching out His brotherly hand to us, He may raise us to heaven along with Him.”—*Calvin*. OBSERVE—1. We have not gone up to the door of heaven for these eternal benefits, but God has come down to us with

14 And <sup>a</sup> as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so

a Nu. 21. 9.

them. Eternal love has *stooped* to our low estate—taken our flesh, and brought these blessings to our doors—to our lips. 2. Now that Christ has come, why should we stand and speculate and ask the *how* and *why* beyond what is revealed? What is revealed, is what “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but what God hath revealed to us by His Spirit.” 3. “The word is nigh us.” *Why should we say in our hearts, “Who shall ascend up into heaven to bring Christ down?”* Rom. 10: 6. The way of salvation is plain and nigh.

14-16. Our Lord proceeds now to speak of some Divine things, which Nicodemus would so poorly understand. As a Jewish doctor he had differently understood the Old Testament predictions and types of the Messiah. He looked for a successor of David on the Jewish throne, as a powerful Prince, (Dan. 12,) who should deliver their nation from bondage, and punish the Gentile nations, or make them minister of their wealth and power to the Jews—misinterpreting the prophecies of Isaiah; ch. 60, &c. Here, therefore, our Lord *begins at Moses*, and expounds unto him the things pertaining to Himself. The Messiah, He says, shall be exalted, not on a temporal throne, but on a cross, as the serpent was lifted up on a pole, (Num. 21: 8, 9,) for an amazing cure. It is the bite of the Old Serpent that afflicts the race, Jew and Gentile, and from this they are to be delivered, as a worse than Egyptian, or Babylonish, or Roman bondage and curse. For God so loved, not Israel merely, but the race of men, Jews and Gentiles, that He gave (devoted to death as a victim) His only-begotten Son, that whosoever, of any nation, believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For as to the object of His Mission, God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world—not to destroy the Gentile nations and to do

must the Son of man be lifted up;

an exterminating work, as you have vainly dreamed—but that the world, of all nations, (“whosoever will,” “as many as receive Him,”) through Him might be saved, without regard to nation or other worldly distinction. Therefore, except a man, any man, be born again—experience an utter change of mind and heart, be born of the Spirit, who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us—who sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God—he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

14. The connexion of the passage is this: Ye receive not my testimony, and yet ye can obtain the truth from no other source. I am come indeed as the Teacher whom you would profess to recognize, but *not a mere teacher, nor a mere man*, for I am in heaven while on earth. I belong to heaven, to the bosom of the Father from which I came as the Revealer, and I am also come as a *vicarious sufferer and a glorious Deliverer*, in which offices I was distinctly symbolized by the Healing Serpent, raised up in the wilderness by Moses, of which you ought to know.

¶ *And as Moses*. It was in the wilderness, on their journey to Canaan, that the people of Israel were bitten by fiery serpents. They were dying under the fatal bite. Moses was commanded to make a brazen image of the serpent and lift it up upon a pole, so high that all could easily see it. And the wonderful provision of God's mercy was, that whoever should look upon that serpent should be healed of the fatal bite. Our Lord refers to it as a type of Himself, and shows us by this use of it, how we are to regard Old Testament persons and events, as often carrying in them a reference to Him, as here, to the Great Healer and Saviour from the sting of Satan and from the miseries of sin. ¶ *Lifted up*. This lifting up of the serpent by Moses was typical of Christ's being lifted up, (ch. 12: 32,) and so it is here explained to this Jew:

15 That whosoever <sup>a</sup> believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For <sup>b</sup> God so loved the world,

a ver. 36. He. 7. 25. b Jno. 4. 2.

ish doctor, who was familiar with the narrative. That symbolical transaction in the wilderness is here interpreted by the Lord Himself. 1. It meant more than was there apparent. It was a *likeness* of the serpent that was erected on the pole. So Christ was made in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. Rom. 8: 3. "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us." 2 Cor. 5: 21. 2. As it was a looking on the Serpent which gave healing, so a believing look upon Christ, (beholding the Lamb of God,) gives salvation. 3. It was *lifted up* as a representation of that by which they had suffered, and as a trophy, to show that there was victory over the plague. So Christ made a show of Satan, triumphing over Him in His cross. Col. 2: 15. The lifting up of the Redeemer, was not merely His crucifixion, but His glorious exaltation. The eye of faith directed to Him, finds peace for the conscience, in a view of His sacrifice for us; and beholds Him in His accepted Mediation, His perfect adapt-ness, and His finished work. ch. 1: 36. Here also is a prediction of His death on the cross, and of His triumphant ascension to glory. ¶ *Must.* The term here used signifies, as commonly in the Gospels, that necessity that belongs to the Divine plan. Luke 24: 26. ¶ *Son of Man.* See Ps. 80: 17. This title our Lord oftenest uses of Himself. According to the Hebrew idiom, it means, He who is eminently possessed of Manhood, as "Son of Consolation," "Son of Thunder," "Son of Perdition," mean such as are in a special sense or degree possessed of these qualities or characters, so our Lord is *the Man*, the highest style of man, the only perfect, sinless man, the perfect pattern to all men, the Man above all others, the second Adam, the glorious God-man, who is not only *very God*, but also *very man*, and as truly

that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

one as the other, "in two distinct natures and one person forever."

15. This agrees with the passage, "And I, if I be lifted up, *will draw all men unto me*," "signifying by what death He should die." ch. 12: 32, 33. ¶ *That whosoever.* This is the world-wide application of the plan—con-fined to no nation or rank. ¶ *Believeth in Him.* It is not the believing that is meritorious, but it is the *one believed in*, that is so vital. Men trust to other confidences and hopes and reject this, and so they perish. ¶ *Not perish.* All will certainly perish if they are not willing to receive and follow Christ. Herein is His love—that He dies to meet the law's requirement so that they may not perish forever, if they will accept His substitution.

16. Our Lord here continues, and opens more fully the great truths contained in that type in the wilderness. "For" connects the passages, as showing that what follows is a further dis-coursing on the subject of vs. 14 and 15, by the same speaker. ¶ *So loved.* This love of God is according to a defi-nite plan. It is not love in general, as some men profess to *hope in* "the *general* goodness of God" without any plan, and discard the revealed plan in the Gospel. He *so* loved the world (in this manner,) *that* (as an exhibition of the love, and as the only plan in connexion with which He does, or will exhibit His love to men,) He gave (as a free gift,) His only-begotten Son—(and this, in strict accordance with a definite plan as to the results)—*that*—(in order that)—whosoever believeth in Him (and only they, in the very neces-sity of the case,) should not perish, (as they must otherwise inevitably do,) but have everlasting life: as the fruit of His mediation—and the benefit of His finished work. Titus 3: 4, 5. OBSERVE.—Love is, in its very nature.

17 For <sup>a</sup> God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the

a Lu. 9. 56.

particular and personal, and not indiscriminate. ¶ *The world.* This great truth, as here announced to a Jew, shows him that the Gentile world is included in God's love, and that the Jews are not exclusive objects of His affection. The plan of redeeming love is here set forth in its great distinctive features. He *thus—so—after this manner*—exhibited His love to mankind. Then follow the particulars. ¶ *That. So that.* This is the statement, showing the magnitude of the love. This is the astonishing fact. (It might refer this inquiring Jew to the case of Abraham and the son of promise.) ¶ *He gave.* The term here expresses the absolute *freeness* of the gift. He spared not His own proper Son, but gave Him up as a victim. It was a *free* gift. Isa. 55: 1. ¶ *His only-begotten Son.* John uses this new name of our Lord—the only-begotten—and is the only one of the Evangelists who uses it. See ch. 1: 14—This is the matchless grace. The whole plan is here traced to the love of God the Father sending the Son. This is the precious Lamb of God, furnished by the Father—the only Lamb of His fold that would suffice—and His office is to take away the sins of the world. It is not as though the Father had no love, or as though the Son must interpose to appease an angry God who took no interest in the sinner's salvation, and exacted the most costly sacrifice. But the Father's love is at the bottom of all the plan—giving up freely His own Son—only begotten Son, who, as freely undertook to meet the eternal demands of justice. Rom. 8: 32. ¶ *That—In order that.* This describes further the plan of redeeming love. This was the object of so unspeakable a gift. His love was so great to our fallen world that He gave His Son—and this was His plan and object in so doing—not that all should thereby be saved without exception or distinction, but that *every one*, without exception or distinction, who believes in Christ should

world; but that the world through him might be saved.

be saved and not perish. This clause is here repeated from vs. 15, showing that the *lifting up* there, refers to the same event as the *giving up* here—and that “the Son of man” there spoken of, is the same person as “His only-begotten Son” here named. The plan of redemption as here set forth by our Lord Himself cannot be understood without taking into view these different clauses of the verse. Every one who believeth is to be saved just as every one who looked on the brazen serpent was healed. ¶ *Believeth in Him.* This is the definite plan. It is founded in a natural necessity. We must have confidence in the plan, or we cannot get the benefits of it. We must believe in Christ, must believe in His Person and offices—in His sufferings and exaltation—and their being for *us*—suited to our case and accepted for our deliverance—else we cannot take the comfort—can have no hope in Him—cannot be living for Heaven—cannot be following Christ. “He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who hath sent Him.” ch. 5: 23. If we believe not in Christ, we reject God's love—put contempt upon the Saviour's agonies—make God a liar, (1 John 5: 10,) and cannot possibly be saved. “Neither is there salvation in any other.” Acts 4: 12. ¶ *Should not perish.* Just as the Litten Israelites, poisoned and ready to die, were, by that miraculous intervention of God, saved from perishing, as they must have done—so this is His gracious object, in sending His Son. He gave Him up for this. OBSERVE.—Perdition in the eye of God is so dreadful—so much more fearful than men ever conceive, that He did not spare His own Son to die, rather than that all men should die eternally. Faith is that saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.

17. This verse denies that Christ



18 He \* that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned al-

a o. 6. 40, 47.

came into the world to condemn it, as the Jews believed that He was to come to condemn the Gentiles. It was no part of God's object in sending the Son, to fulfill any such vindictive plans as the Jews had in view, nor to condemn the race as He might justly have done. To judge, sentence and punish sinners was not His aim, but to furnish a Saviour for sinners and for the world. OBSERVE.—When God might have revealed Himself in wrath, He revealed Himself in saving love and mercy. Instead of being arraigned to answer at His righteous bar, we are invited to be pardoned at the mercy seat. ¶ *Be saved.* The expression is here varied. It is not said that they might have opportunity to save themselves, but that through Him they might be saved. And this agrees every way with the requirement just stated—that is, *faith in Christ*, which receives and rests upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.

18. *He that believeth.* He who by faith receives and rests upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, trusting in His atonement, embracing His righteousness, relying on His finished work, and receiving Him in all His offices as our only Saviour. ¶ *On Him.* As distinct from any and all other objects and grounds of confidence—renouncing self-righteousness and all other hopes. ¶ *Is not condemned.* He is not in a condemned state. Because Christ removes the condemnation, by His sufferings and obedience being applied to his case. He accepts Christ's finished work, and in Christ he stands. He stands justified by faith in Christ, and has acceptance, peace, and all the blessings of salvation. This agrees exactly with the plan of grace as set forth by Paul and all the apostles. Rom. 8: 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"—who believe in Him, and stand in Him. "Being

ready, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

justified by faith"—by this believing in Christ "we have peace with God." Rom. 5: 1, &c. This agrees also with John the Baptist's testimony, (vs. 36,) "Hath everlasting life." ¶ *Condemned already.* That is—by the very nature of the case—he who rejects the only way of pardon and acquittal, stands condemned—spurning or neglecting the only way of justification, he is of course condemned *already*. As he was condemned, so he remains; only under condemnation greatly aggravated by this rejection of the only way. So that this is THE condemnation now, above all. vs. 19. ¶ *Because.* Unbelief keeps a man in the condemnation from which Christ would release him through the exercise of faith. He is condemned by nature; but he does not perish for lack of any way of salvation, but for lack of faith in the only appointed way. Therefore it is clear that the condemnation takes effect upon him, because he has not embraced the offered release. This is also the greatest aggravation of his condemnation. He is also condemned *already* by this very rejection of Christ without any need of any extra act of God in condemning him. "The word (of salvation) that Christ hath spoken, the same shall judge (condemn) him." ch 12: 47, 48. OBSERVE—1. Unbelief seems to many to be only negative, and no positive sin. But it is a most heinous and aggravated offence. It is putting contempt upon God's costly plan of grace. Besides, "he that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." 1 John 5: 10. 2. No matter how amiable and excellent otherwise a man may be, unbelief in Christ is the great grievous sin which excludes from salvation, and it cannot be otherwise. Hence, all whom the Holy Spirit convines are convinced and convicted of this sin—*because they believe not on Christ.* ch. 16:

19 And this is the condemnation, that light <sup>a</sup> is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

<sup>a</sup> c. 1. 4, 9-11. <sup>b</sup> Job 24. 13, 17. Pr. 4. 18.

9. 3. We see that the reception of Divine truth is not merely intellectual, but chiefly a moral act.

19. *And this.* Our Lord here states more fully the whole case as it is with every man. Many wonder why they should be condemned. They cannot see that they have done so much that is evil, they do not consider what they have omitted to do. Here is the reason given for their condemnation, and and it is from the Judge himself. It is their willful rejection of the Light after it has come to the world. ¶ *Light.* Literally, *the Light*, spoken of, ch. 1: 7. Nicodemus had owned that Christ was a teacher come from God—a great teacher, such as the Jews were wont to call a Light. Christ was *THE* Light of Lights—"the Light of Life," the Light which was "the Life of men." ch. 1: 4; 8: 12. Nicodemus was not ready to follow his own clear convictions and accept of Christ's teachings. And in all cases this is what condemns men, even at the bar of their own conscience. ¶ *Loved darkness.* Literally, *the darkness* (spoken of,) that of their natural condition. This is a general statement. It is the universal history. "The darkness comprehended (retained, received,) it not." ¶ *Rather than Light.* Literally, *the light*, especially the true light—Jesus Christ. He who has done most for men, suffered most and offered most—is most avoided by them. How strange that any who can have light, should prefer the darkness. Such hate the Scripture as applied to themselves. The reason is not that the revelation is not clear enough, or well enough proved; but it is because the love of ignorance, error, and sin, and all the darkness and corruption of nature is so strong, that they choose to remain in their natural condition. Any turning to Christ

20 For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither <sup>b</sup> cometh to the light, lest his deeds should <sup>1</sup> be reprov'd.

21 But he that doeth <sup>c</sup> truth

1 or, *discovered.* c 1 Jno. 1. 6.

is avoided, because it condemns their whole life and casts away all their trusts and boasts and pleasures of sin.

20. Here our Lord adds a still fuller explanation of this common course of men. He traces it to a radical principle of depraved nature. Evil doers do not love exposure, nor seek the truth. Men do not come to the Light there is in Christ, because they see that it will expose and condemn their darling sins, and will require them to give up their wicked indulgences. They will avoid the scripture and prayer, and pungent preaching, or conversation on this great subject, for this reason. ¶ *Doeth evil*—practiceth evil things. In ch. 5: 29, this same distinction is observed between the two classes. ¶ *Be reprov'd.* The term here used, means to refute or *expose*, with *condemnation* of the wrong conduct. It is the same term as is used, ch. 16: 8, of the Spirit's work in *convicting* sinners. This distinction of opposite characters would apply to the two classes among the Jews—the carnal, who would not receive Christ when He appeared to them, and the spiritual, like Simeon and Anna and Cornelius, who waited for the consolation of Israel. The principle is general and plain, and applies to all, in all ages. vs. 21. This course of sinners, willfully rejecting the light, shows the justice of their condemnation. How could they endure heaven, where "the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21: 23.

21. *Doeth truth.* Literally, *doeth*, (worketh) *the truth*. He whose deeds are in accordance with the truth, "as the truth is in Jesus"—cometh to the light that he may have everything clearly manifested and nothing concealed or kept in the dark, that he may know wherein he does amiss, and may have it appear, that his deeds are

cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought<sup>a</sup> in God.

¶ 22 After these

a 3 Jno. 11. †

wrought in God. Instead of wishing to have his deeds concealed, he would have them revealed, brought to light—not for any vain boast before men; but for examination of himself in the light of God's word—so that judging himself he may not be judged and condemned with the wicked. 1 Cor. 11: 31. ¶ *Cometh to the light.* vss. 16, 18. See ch. 18: 37. 1 John 3: 19. The general principle is to be applied especially here. This is only another mode of expressing that *believing* which is not merely an act, but a spirit, a temper, a principle always more or less acting, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation. Coming to Christ is really and eminently “coming to the light.” He is God's revelation to men, “the way, and the truth, and the life.” Such well-doers will come therefore to the scripture, from a sincere desire to know what God teaches, and will come to Christ, whom the scripture sets forth. The principle is of universal application. All sincere men would come to the light—but sinners have a bad conscience, and therefore avoid it. All who are true workers of good, come to Christ, and refuse to trust in themselves or in their own doing. This is light to them—the way of light. Any other plan is darkness. Of course it is not taught, that men have a good conscience before they have faith, or that by believing we deserve the praise of good works, but rather that no one can be said to do good works who hates the light—and will not come to the true Light as revealed in the Gospel. ¶ *Made manifest.* May be shown, proved. ¶ *Wrought in God.* This is the object in coming to the light. It is that he may “prove his own works,” and know that they are of God, and “that men may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 5. It is not

6\*

things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and<sup>b</sup> baptized.

b c. 4. 2.

for any glorifying of self, but that God may be glorified in him, and in all his daily living. It is to have it seen that his works are wrought, not in himself, or in any reliance on his own strength, but *in God*—in the light and strength which God gives, (Eph. 5: 8; 1 Cor. 7: 39,) to show that his life has its sources in God—“hid with Christ in God”—that his works are only proofs of this new birth by the Spirit. OBSERVE—We hear nothing of the working of this interview upon Nicodemus, except from the effects. We hear the “*sound*” (vs. 8) of the Spirit's efficient operation, where his devotion is afterwards referred to. ch. 7: 50; 12: 42; 19: 39. This discourse teaches—1. The absolute necessity of the new birth in the case of every man, whoever he be. 2. The way of salvation by Jesus Christ, as originated in the Love of God—and as calling for men's believing reception and embrace. 3. The condemnation of sinners—so aggravated by the coming of such light, of such sufficient knowledge, of such light which is “the life of men,” so different in this respect, from the light of the law, which is their death. OBSERVE—Soon after this conversation Jesus and His disciples depart into the vicinity of John the Baptist, who again testifies to Him.

#### § 23. JESUS REMAINS IN JUDEA AND BAPTIZES—FURTHER TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 3. 22-36. |

22. *After these things.* Not immediately, but a while after. It is probable that this preliminary work in Judea, of which John gives special account, and which the other Evangelists have not recorded, did not occupy more than two months in all. ¶ *The land of.* It is here meant that they came, on this

23 And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, <sup>a</sup> because there was much water there; and <sup>b</sup> they came and were baptized:

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sa. 9. 4. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 3. 5, 6.

occasion, into the rural districts of Judea, either from the chief city, Jerusalem, where He had conversed a short time previously with Nicodemus, or, possibly, from Galilee. ¶ *Baptized.* Our Lord is here said to have done what was done by His authority; for, it is said, (ch. 4: 1, 2,) that He Himself baptized not, but His disciples.

23. *And John.* John the Baptist we see, did not repel those who willingly came to him, though Jesus had thus far commenced (through His disciples) to administer the Christian baptism. Yet John invited the people less than before.—*Bengel.* ¶ *Enon.* This name is from a word signifying “fountain,” which is a common name for watering places, (Ain.) We often made our stay for the night at some *Ain*. The place here referred to is generally located fifty-three miles N. E. of Jerusalem, in Samaria. The ancient Salim, or Shalem, however, (Gen. 33: 18,) was located near to Nablous, towards the Jordan, and South of the hilly range of Gilboa. This would seem to have been the more probable vicinity. Some understand it to have been the spot in the wilderness of Judea as mentioned in Josh. 15: 61, where Salim is named in the same chapter. ¶ *Much water.* The phrase is “many waters”—many small streams. This would serve his convenience in going from point to point, both for baptizing and for drink for the people and cattle. Some imagine that “much water” being named as his reason for being there, refers to the depth of the water, and would go to prove that he baptized by immersion. But this inference is utterly destroyed by the literal rendering—as many streams would be no reason for an immersionist to tarry there, when one *deep stream* like the Jordan would have

24 For John <sup>c</sup> was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 14. 3.

been a reason. There would be other reasons for selecting a well-watered region for several days' sojourn in that hot land. The crowds who came to be baptized, would need to have easy access to water for themselves and for their animals with which they traveled. As we traveled through that land our dragomen always carefully arranged to have us stop at places where there was good water with ample and certain supplies. All other conveniences were made secondary to this. The great scarcity of water throughout the country, and the danger of streams being dry, made it necessary to know where the *water would be sure*—so that we might stop for the night where our company and the animals could have drink, and where water would be fresh and good to fill our bottles till we reached the next water station. Where a great company was gathered, and baptizing also was to be done, the many waters would be a most important consideration, without inferring anything from this as to the mode of baptism. We observed that this region was the best watered with small streams, gushing from springs in the hill sides—little rivulets and brooks.

24. *For John.* This accounts for John's continuing his work, as his ministry had not yet come to an end, and Christ had not yet formally and fully entered on His public official work, as He did after John was cast into prison. The other Evangelists have given the narrative, more or less in detail, of John's imprisonment. This Evangelist only alludes to the fact. Christ's baptizing, through His disciples, was rather preparatory to His public ministry, and unaccompanied by the fuller manifestation. But as John's ministry was waning, our Lord's was waxing. ¶ *Not yet cast, &c.* Here

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou<sup>a</sup> barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all<sup>b</sup> *men* come to him.

27 John answered and said, A<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> c. 1. 7, 15, &c. <sup>b</sup> Ps. 65. 2. Is. 45. 23. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 12-14; 4. 7. He. 5. 4. Ja. 1. 17.

it is implied that John was soon after imprisoned, but *not yet*. And this notice is thrown in, perhaps to guard against an inference that he had been imprisoned already, since the other Evangelists had not recorded any ministrations of Christ prior to the Baptist's imprisonment. John's aim, however, is to narrate the events in Judea, and he accordingly gives these preliminary doings that occurred there.

26. The different baptizings of John and our Lord, not far apart, led to a questioning about the two. It was started by John's disciples. They began to be jealous for their Master's waning reputation and work, and hence they challenged the Jews who went for Christ's baptizing—as to the *whole matter of purification*. This was the Jewish term, and was used for the Levitical Baptisms. ch. 2: 6. They probably insisted that John's baptism was pre-requisite even to Christ's; while on the other hand, the Jews attending upon Christ's baptism would naturally urge that the Master's presence and work dispensed with that which was merely preparatory to it. The disciples of John appeal to him. ¶ *He that*. Christ is here referred to as one yet comparatively unknown, at least, by name. ¶ *To whom*. This may convey the idea that He who was indebted to John's testimony for his prominence and popularity, was now likely to supersede John. ¶ *All men*. The multitude flocked to Christ's baptism.

27. *A man*. I, who am only a man, cannot (am not able to) receive or assume any thing except by Divine gift. I cannot go beyond my divinely

man can<sup>1</sup> receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, <sup>a</sup> I am not the Christ, but that <sup>e</sup> I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride<sup>1</sup> is

<sup>1</sup> or, *take unto himself*. <sup>d</sup> c. 1. 20, 27. <sup>e</sup> Lu. 1. 17. <sup>f</sup> Ca. 4. 8-12. Jer. 2. 2 Eze. 16. 8. Hos. 2. 19. 20. Matt 22. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Ep. 5. 25, 27. Re. 21. 9.

appointed office-work. This is all as it should be, and as it was predicted to be—and as I announced that it was to be.

28. He now appeals to them that this was just what he had all along declared. ¶ *The Christ*. John does not directly call Jesus the Christ, but so speaks of him that this may easily be inferred.—*Bengel*. ¶ *Before Him*. This points personally to Jesus, as the One whose forerunner he was.

29. *He that hath the Bride*. He to whom all come, thus shows himself to be the Bridegroom, by having the bride attend upon Him.—See Solomon's Song. ¶ *Friend, &c*. This refers to the *groomsman*—the master of ceremonies—who is also the particular, personal friend of the groom. By this one John designates himself, and his name (John) signifies the grace or “favor of God.” ¶ *Which standeth, &c*. These terms express his own attitude of *waiting upon* the Master whom he heralded. ¶ *Rejoiceth greatly*. Literally—*rejoiceth with joy*,—“without sadness and envy.” But it is rather the Hebrew idiom for “*greatly rejoiceth*.” ¶ *Voice*. Because His voice indicates His presence, and shows that his own preparatory heralding work is fulfilled. Besides this, the voice of such a friend cheers and charms him. This may refer to a part of the ceremony of marriage among the Jews, as it is the part of this officiating friend to lead the groom in to the spouse, and uncover her face to him. His *voice*, then, would mean *the joy and gladness* of this introduction. See Jer. 7: 34; 25: 10. In the East, this introduction on the marriage occasion, is often the first sight that the parties have of each other.

the bridegroom: but the friend <sup>a</sup> of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

a Ca. 5. 1.

The whole arrangement for their marriage is made by the parents.—This that they complain of, he rejoices in. OBSERVE—As the Bridegroom is here said to be known by his having the Bride (the believing church) attending upon him, so may it be asserted, that she that hath the Bridegroom is the Bride—the *people who have Christ with them are Christ's Church*. ¶ *This my joy*. This would seem to refer to the advent of the Bridegroom, as witnessed by his voice—rather than to the following clause. To herald Christ is what he came for, and he is satisfied to exalt Him.

30. *He must*. The term rendered “*must*,” is commonly used in the New Testament to refer to the Divine purpose. It points to the *necessity* in God's plan. It is ordained that He must INCREASE. That is, to Him hereafter all must come, (Josh. 4: 14,) and not even death would hinder that increase of Christ. Hence, the Evangelists speak very differently of John's death and of Christ's.—Bengel. ¶ *Decrease*. John's name and office would *go down*, as Christ's *went up*—just as the stars grow dim when the sun rises. Christ's advance would make John's preparatory work decline, for he was sent to announce Christ as coming, and to point him out and then to disappear. And this was the Divine plan.

31. John the Baptist here continues his discourse, to show the reason why he must decrease, while Christ must increase. He sets forth Christ's superior qualifications and prerogatives as a witness-bearer—that He has a higher rank—and is able to speak not of what He hears, but of what He knows from experience. For these reasons which he here gives, John was properly enough to be cast in the shade by His

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

31 He that cometh from above,<sup>b</sup> is above all: he <sup>c</sup>that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of

b c. 6. 33; 8. 23. Ep. 1. 20, 21 c 1 Cor. 15. 47.

coming. As the principal had appeared, the agent might disappear. ¶ *He that cometh*. Here is the title that designates Christ as the *comer* according to the prophecies. “He that cometh,” or “He that should come.” He was Divinely commissioned the Apostle of our profession. ¶ *From above*. This was an appeal to the Jewish belief, as they admitted the Father's authority, and were therefore bound to recognize the Son, as sent from Him. ¶ *Above all*,—in rank: and as He was above all, He was above him, of course—and so far above him as to be above all dignitaries or functionaries on earth. ¶ *Of the earth*. John now describes his own origin and rank, in contrast with that of Christ. Literally, it reads, “He that is of the earth is of the earth.” This is the most that you can make of him, as to his rank. He is infinitely beneath the Divine being. ¶ *Speaketh*. Of course he can *give* only what he *has got*. He is bounded by his own being and relations. He can speak only of earthly things from any independent knowledge of his own. He must be a mere mouth-piece for God in proclaiming heavenly things. John would sink himself utterly into insignificance to have Christ exalted. So should all ministers of Christ do. He does not disparage his ministerial commission, as sent to proclaim Christ. He would have it plainly understood, that when Christ Himself appears, (and in comparison with Christ) he is nothing. As he is of, and from the earth, he can speak even of heavenly things, only from an earthly platform and point of view. Bengel remarks, that on this account, the multitude are more ready to hear such a speaker. But the spiritual excellence of a preacher is not to be measured by the eagerness of the hearers.

the earth: he that cometh from heaven, is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no<sup>a</sup> man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his

a c. 1. 11.

32. John here repeats his assertion of Christ's Divine authority and supremacy as above all—explaining ch. 1: 1. ¶ *What He hath seen.* John declares that Christ could speak from His own personal, *immediate* knowledge, and of things that He had seen in Heaven, and in the Godhead whence He came. Ch. 1: 18. ¶ *Testifieth.* Christ could *bear witness* of heavenly and divine matters as He personally knew them from His own sight and hearing. While John could only *speak* of them, at this great distance from them, Christ spoke with every advantage and authority, as He belonged to the bosom of the Father, (ch. 1: 18,) and was even while on earth essentially in Heaven, as to His Divine nature. vs. 13. ¶ *No man.* John now shows that while Christ deserves universal attention, on account of His origin, rank and personal knowledge of what He testifies, He is received as a witness by comparatively *none*. Bengel says that John so ardently desires that Christ should have all, that what the disciples called "*all*," (vs. 26,) John calls *none*, "*no man*," here.

33. It appears from this that John did not mean to say that *none* received Christ's testimony, for here he speaks of those who did receive His witness, as he himself did, and others, as Simon, Andrew, Nathanael, &c. ch. 1: 40, &c. ¶ *Set to his seal.* That is, hath *certified*—hath put his seal to the acknowledgment—hath *subscribed* for himself, and confessed and professed before others. ¶ *That God is true.* That is, as Christ is sent from the Father, the receiving of His testimony is a sealing of God's truth. And farther, as Christ himself is God, our be-

testimony hath<sup>b</sup> set to his seal that God is true.

34 For<sup>c</sup> he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure<sup>d</sup> unto him.

35 The Father loveth the Son,<sup>e</sup>

b 1 John 5. 10. c c. 7. 16. d Ps. 45. 7. Is. 11. 2; 59. 21. e 1. 16. Col. 1. 19. f Matt. 28. 18.

lieving in Him, subscribes to the truth of God. ch. 12: 44. This agrees with the language of John the Evangelist, 1 John, 5: 10. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." OBSERVE—Here, again, in another way, John the Baptist's testimony of Christ's Godhead is set forth by the Evangelist in accordance with his object of testifying to Christ's Divinity.

34. Here again the Baptist refers to Christ as the *sent of God*—the *Ambassador of God*—the *Apostle of Jehovah*—the *Servant of the Most High*. Isa. 42: 1. As thus Divinely commissioned and sent forth from God, He speaketh the words of God—delivers the Divine message. What He says is therefore to be received as the very language of God the Father. ¶ *For God.* Here the reason is assigned for the words of Christ being Divine. It is the unlimited gift of the Spirit which Christ received, in this distinction from all others—who had it only *measurably*. Ephes. 4: 7. *God giveth not the Spirit by measure* unto Him, *as He does* to other messengers, or ambassadors of truth. He possessed the Holy Spirit originally, in perfection, and hence, needed not to receive it in limited supplies, as others did. The Trinity here appears—the *Father, Son and Spirit*.

35. Here a reason is assigned for the unlimited gift of the Spirit to Christ, viz: The unlimited love of the Father, who gives the Spirit. See Matt. 11: 27: 29. "For that love, with which embracing the Son, He embraces us also in Him, leads Him to communicate all His benefits to us by His hand."—*Calvin*. The Bride is His, (vs. 29,) and Life is His, (vs. 36.) Since therefore, every gift and blessing is

and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He <sup>a</sup> that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath <sup>b</sup> of God abideth on him.

<sup>a</sup> Ha. 2. 4. ver. 15. 16. <sup>b</sup> Ro. 1. 18.

put into Christ's hand, only they who will take from Christ's hand by faith, can have any saving gift or blessing. He has purchased them all by his blood, and they must flow through Him, as from the fountain. Christ himself declared that his Father's love to us was so great, that He loved Him especially, because He laid down His life for His people.

36. The Baptist here rises to a high strain of Evangelical doctrine, and speaks like the Evangelist himself, in setting forth the absolute need of faith in Christ. He presents it in the strongest light—as if rising to this conclusion, or irresistibly borne to it by all he had just surveyed. Christ being such a divinely provided Saviour, he who receives and rests upon Him by faith, is *saved*—He HATH eternal life, *hath it already*, in the principle within him, and in the promise in God's word. Our Lord uses the same language, (ch. 6: 47.) The believer obtains pardon and peace by faith in Christ, (Rom. 4: 1, 8: 1.) gets release from condemnation, and hath passed from death unto life. ¶ *Believeth not*. These two clauses agree with our Lord's commission, "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." ¶ *Not see life*. As there is no way of escaping from death but by the deliverance furnished us in Christ, he who receives not this by faith, must be lost. "If it be the office of Christ to *save* what was lost, they who reject the salvation offered in Him, are justly suffered to remain in death."—*Calvin*. They shall never see, or enjoy, or attain to life. But they lie under the condemnation and wrath of God, from which Christ alone could have rescued them.

## CHAPTER IV.

¶ **W**HEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized <sup>c</sup> more disciples than John,

<sup>c</sup> c. 3. 22, 26.

## CHAPTER IV.

### § 24. JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT AND JESUS'S DEPARTURE INTO GALILEE.

| Matt.  | Mark      | Luke.     | John.   |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 4. 12. | 6. 17-20. | 3. 19-20. |         |
|        | 1. 14.    | 4. 14.    | 4. 1-4. |

John had first shown how Christ disclosed Himself to a devout Israelite, Nathanael—and obtained a confession of His Messiahship—then, how He wrought conviction of His Divine Mission in the mind of a Jewish Rabbi, by His miracles, and further revealed Himself by His discourse. He now proceeds further to set forth the Divinity of our Lord as confessed by a Samaritan woman, and gives the striking incidents. This occurrence is not immediately connected with the former chapter. *John's imprisonment*, (§ 24.), as recorded by the other Evangelists, belongs first in the history. In the 3d chapter, vs. 22, it was stated that Jesus tarried with His disciples sometime, in Judea—and here we are told that after that delay, He returned into Galilee. John's object is also here seen to give some of the most important discourses of our Lord. We observe also the order of his testimonies. Next to that of a Jewish Rabbi, he gives that of the Samaritans, who were a connecting link between the Jews and Gentiles, a mixed people, with a different worship, and hated by the Jews. It was in this same order that Christianity went forth—to Samaria first, from Jerusalem. Acts 8: 5. And so it was predicted by our Lord. Acts 1: 8.

1. *When therefore*. The reason for this movement of our Lord, is distinctly given. ¶ *Knew*. He knew it as soon as it came to pass, and knew



2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

even what they had *heard*, without needing any report of it. ¶ *Heard*. That is, "with indignation and offence." ¶ *Made and baptized more*. Literally, *makes and baptizes*—is now doing it. The offence of the Pharisees, that is, of their leaders, may have been what was already complained of by John's disciples, (ch. 3: 26,) the growing popularity of our Lord. This, however, would affect them differently from the followers of John. John's baptizing was to them an innovation. Hence, they had early sent a deputation to John, to know by what authority he baptized. ch. 1: 25. They were most jealous about rites and ceremonies, and claimed to be the regulators of worship, as they were a majority in the Sanhedrim; and the Sadducees cared nothing for outward forms. And they had scarcely allowed John's baptism, after many searching inquiries about his authority. Now this man Jesus was even going beyond John in this questionable work. ¶ *Jesus Himself*. This clause may be added either to show wherein the Pharisees had been misinformed, or perhaps to show, wherein they chiefly were offended—that Christ was instituting the ordinance, and it was performed already in His name, by His disciples—and that thus these common men were doing what was scarcely tolerated in John the Baptist, and without authority from themselves, the Sanhedrim. Our Lord did not baptize, as Paul did not, because baptism was not salvation, and His office was rather to preach and teach. 1 Cor. 1: 14–16. ¶ *He left Judea*. Because He knew also what the malice of the Pharisees would do. He did not fear any danger when His hour should come. But He had not yet finished His earthly work. Hence, He went into Galilee, to be removed from their immediate jurisdiction. Their seat was at Jerusalem, where their leaders, who

¶ 4 And he must needs <sup>a</sup> go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar,

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 2, 49.

persecuted our Lord, sat in the Sanhedrim. Mark 2: 22. Matthew states (ch. 4: 11, 12, 17,) that it was *when our Lord heard that John was imprisoned*, that He departed into Galilee. But this statement of John, alludes to the *Pharisees' knowledge* of John Baptist's numerous followers—and that now they had heard that Christ's were even more numerous. Their knowledge of John's popularity had probably just led to his imprisonment—and our Lord heard of their receiving information about His greater popularity, in a way to show plainly what He might expect from them accordingly. He had heard of John's being imprisoned, and of the Pharisees having even a stronger motive for laying hands upon Him, from *what they had heard*.

§ 25. OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.—*Shechem or Neapolis*.

|       |       |       |          |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|       |       |       | 4. 4–42. |

4. *He must needs*. It was not absolutely necessary, but this was the shortest road, and especially it lay in the Divine plan. The term is so used by John. It was in the path of His mediatorial purpose and work. That was always to our Lord the best road, which was the road to spread His Gospel, and to save lost souls. For this, He went even to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, just to seek and find the poor Syrophenician woman. And now He orders His course, so as to meet and save this Samaritan woman. Our Lord's purpose here was not mere speed, since He tarried two days on the way. None but the very strict Jew passed around Samaria, through Perea, out of hatred to the Samaritans. vs. 9. The Galileans ordinarily took the direct course of about three days on foot.

5, 6. *Sychar*. This town is also

near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave <sup>a</sup> to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there.

*a* Ge. 33. 19; 48. 22. Jos. 24. 32.

named in the Old Testament *Sychem*, or *Shechem*. Gen. 12: 6. It was called by the Romans *Flavia Neapolis*, from which the present Arab name *Nablous*, has come. It lies about 34 miles North of Jerusalem and 15 miles South of the city of Samaria, and in the narrow gorge between Mount Gebal and Mount Gerizim. Before entering the gorge from the South, we came upon the well of Jacob. Two pairs of grey granite columns about 15 paces apart, and one quite similar, outside the low rude wall, are the ruins of an ancient church, erected to mark the spot. It is remarkable that not only Jews and Samaritans, but Christians and Mohammedans, all agree in the traditions of Jacob's well and Joseph's tomb; and that they can be traced back as early as the beginning of the fourth century, in the time of Eusebius, the Historian. The well's mouth we found closed by a huge stone, and it was quite dry. We came to it in the heat of the day, about two o'clock, and could well appreciate our Lord's weariness which led Him to sit carelessly down upon the well-side, as we also did. At the junction of two valleys, and looking up through the narrow pass between the two great hills of Ebal and Gerizim, it is a retired and beautiful spot. We wished in that quiet and sacredness, as it was on the eve too of the Sabbath, that our Lord would meet us there and talk with us, as He did with the woman so long ago. The people of Nablous are the most bigoted and hostile toward Christians. Boys hooted and spat at us, and threw stones, which we learned was only a common expression of this feeling there. It is strange that there, where they refused Christ their hospitality, and where the disciples would have called fire down upon them, and where afterward the Spirit descended, the old hostility should yet exist. The place has now some 12,000 inhabitants, and fine ba-

Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

zaars. Large granite columns are here and there to be seen, lying along the side of the streets. At the further gate we saw a group of lepers standing—one with the nose eaten off—others white around the wrist. Fifteen of them followed us to our tents. As we were alarmed, our Dragoman offered them two piastres each, to go away. They refused, and demanded five. Towards evening we rode up the steep and stony sides of Mount Gerizim. On the summit are immense ruins, of beveled stone work, indicating a great antiquity, and supposed by some to be the remains of the Old Temple there, as they contend, but this is not likely. On our way to Samaria, near "the drowned meadow," we met a Samaritan named *Yakob*, whom we found to be the man that recovered the Bible dropped by Bonar and McCheyne, down the well of Jacob. He said that the day after the morrow—the Passover, was their great feast day. That they were then to sacrifice their seven lambs on Mount Gerizim, according to the Divine command—that they had the ancient Law written on Gazelle skin, and thirty-four hundred and sixty years old; that they were sixty-seven in number now, and as soon as they should reach seventy, they would be the greatest people in the world; as this was the number with which Jacob went down to Egypt and became a nation. They keep Saturday as their Sabbath. They have a synagogue, and have public prayers there, at morning, noon and evening, and meet also on the four great festivals, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and Atonement. They read the Law. They have no dealings with the Jews at this day, as of old the Jews had none with them. ¶ *Parcel of ground.* From Gen. 33: 19, we find that Jacob bought a field near Shechem—and from Josh. 24: 32, we find that Joseph was buried there, and it is said that it became the

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus

saith unto her, Give me to drink.

inheritance of the children of Joseph. This well, as Robinson suggests, may have been dug by Jacob for an independent supply of water on this plot of ground, as the region around here, is well watered otherwise. We saw a white tomb near the foot of the hill, which

is pointed out as the tomb of Joseph. See Heb. 11: 22. ¶ *Sat thus:* or *accordingly*—that is, as He was tired. The word *thus*, stands connected with the word *therefore*, and reads “*therefore—so,*” *therefore* being wearied, so He sat down, &c. ¶ *On the well.* As we found



the well, there was over the mouth a vaulted chamber, which, though now below the surface, may have been original to the well-curb, that often is to be seen around these ancient wells, in Palestine. In the valley beyond Samaria, we found a well, which had overflowed, and it seemed only a shallow pond of water, with a large stone in the centre. One of our company, an active, muscular man, rode up to it to give his thirsty horse a drink. The animal, stepping forward into the water, to enjoy a free draught, pitched into the well. The rider instinctively sprang forward, and laid hold of the stone, which proved part of the well-curb; while the poor horse was struggling in the well, just keeping his head

out of the water. It was only by laying hold of him with all our forces, by bridle, saddle and mane, that we at length succeeded in dragging him out. ¶ *Sixth hour.* That is, twelve o'clock at noon. It was the hour for mid-day meal, and hence, the disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

7. *Woman of Samaria.* Not from the city of Samaria, but a Samaritan woman, from Sychar the adjacent town. In the East it is still the business of women to carry water, (as above): and it is customary for travellers to stop at wells, or fountains, which are few, and, in that warm country, most refreshing on a journey. It was to be a sign to the two disciples commissioned to prepare the Passover,

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?—for the Jews

have no dealings <sup>a</sup> with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift <sup>b</sup> of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living <sup>c</sup> water.

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 10. 28. <sup>b</sup> Ep. 2. 8. <sup>c</sup> Is. 12. 3; 41. 17, 18. Je. 2. 13. Zec. 12. 1; 14. 8. Re. 22. 17.

that they should meet a *man* bearing a pitcher of water—which was unusual. ¶ *Give me.* Our Lord improves her errand to press His own errand. He asks of her, in order to have her ask of Him. This is the spirit in which He makes all His demands upon us. It is not that He has need, so much as that He may lead us to obtain the blessings which He has to give, and which we so perishingly need.

8. The Evangelist mentions this to show how He came to ask of her, as His disciples were not present. Our Lord, as a man, hungered, and thirsted, and was wearied. But His meat was to do His Father's will, and to give His salvation to sinners. ¶ *The city.* Sychar. It was about half an hour's distance from the well.

9. *How is it.* She knew from His dress, features and accent, (Judges 12: 6,) that He was a Jew. She inquires, therefore, on account of her surprise at His asking of her a favor, or to express her national alienation from the Jews—probably the former. The explanatory clause here added, is commonly taken as the Evangelist's and not the woman's. ¶ *No dealings.* The disciples had gone into the city to buy meat—which shows that there was some dealing between them. But no social intercourse existed. The enmity originated at the building of Zerubbabel's temple. Neh. 4: 2. Ordinarily, the Jews were not allowed even to buy of the Samaritans. But our Lord did not encourage such a feeling.

10. *If thou knewest.* Our Lord's reply would rather intimate that she made objection to His request. Else it was meant to show her that He does

not partake of the Jewish enmities toward her people. He therefore hints to her that she has more to expect from Him than He could possibly ask of her. ¶ *The gift of God.* Here Jesus opens to her His meaning—that He was no common Jew—and that He was divinely commissioned to give to her more than she could give to Him, and rather to give than to take. The obligation would be all on her side if she only understood it. This gift is Christ, who is “the *unspeakable gift*,” (2 Cor. 9: 15,) as is further expressed in the next clause. If she only knew who He was, she would understand God's gift which He came to bestow. This may refer more expressly to the Holy Spirit, as symbolized by the water—which was the gift which He should impart. ch. 7: 37–39. ¶ *Living water.* Here our Lord further hints of His high spiritual meaning. He had *living* water to give. In a mere natural sense this would mean, *spring* water in distinction from *cistern water*—*running* water and not *stagnant*. In a higher sense he meant it as being the “water of life;” (Rev. 22: 1,) from “the fountain of living waters.” Jer. 2: 13; 17: 13. In Palestine, where water is scarce, “*living water*”—that is, running water, or water perpetually supplied—as in springs and fountains and deep wells—is counted very precious. Where these are lacking, they often hew out cisterns from the limestone rock, to catch the rain and hold a supply for travelers along a desert road. Coming up from the Dead Sea to Bethlehem, we were suffering from thirst until we came to such a large reservoir hewn out of the rock. The

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto

water was covered with a green scum, and looked most uninviting. But on letting down a skin bottle by a cord, the scum was found to cover cool, clear water, which was most sweet and refreshing. See Plate, p. 73.

11. *To draw with.* The term means a bucket, or bottle, such as they let down with a cord into the well. Travelers carry these, as we also did. The woman, living in mere earthly ideas, does not yet catch the spiritual sense, but refers to the well. She was evidently puzzled, as we see from her next question. ¶ *Deep.* The well is, by some measurements, *seventy-five*, by others, a *hundred and five* feet in depth, nine in diameter. ¶ *That living water.* Literally—"The water which is living," "from wells of salvation." Isa. 12: 3; Zach. 14: 8. "For with thee is the fountain of life." Ps. 36: 9.

12. She sees that He claims some prerogative, she knows not what, and now addresses Him, "*Sir.*" ¶ *Art thou greater—more excellent.* She now wants to know if He boasts of any thing beyond the patriarch Jacob—of any better water, or better well, or more abundant supply. She claims Jac. b as the father of her nation, as the Samaritans still do. The Samaritans were a mixed people, springing partly from a remnant of the ten tribes, and partly from Chaldeans brought thither. Hence, they were regarded as a connecting link between the Jews and the Heathen. And this was recognized in the plan for the progress of Christianity. Acts 1: 8; 10: 28. When men are called to give up their false systems, they fall back upon their ancestors who have handed these

her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But <sup>a</sup> whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give <sup>b</sup> him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him <sup>c</sup> a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him,

*a c. 6. 33, 58. b c. 17. 2, 3. Rom. 6. 23. c c. 7. 38.*

down to them, and so, one generation of falsehoods supports another. How many hoary systems of superstition and irreligion stand on no better foundation than their antiquity. And yet the newness of a theory is no proof of its worth, any more than its antiquity is, in itself, a disproof of it. ¶ *Gave us.* This was the common tradition—and the well had so much greater value, in her view, because it was used, as she believed, by Jacob, who owned the ground, and because it was a gift or bequest from him, as she believed, to her people. All this was said boastfully in a way that would convey a passing reflection upon the Jews, as not thus descended from Jacob, or, at least, not so honored by him.

13. Our Lord now further opens His meaning, and declares that He can give a better supply than she could get from the best well on earth. He says nothing of being greater than Jacob. He appealed to her own experience as to the inability of that water to satisfy her thirst beyond the present time, much less for all the future. And herein He promised a much better kind of water—allowing no distressing thirst—as its supply and satisfaction never fail.

14. *In him.* A supply *within*—a portable, *internal* well or fountain—how wonderful! to be carried about in the bosom. This shows that it was a *spiritual* matter—a gushing *well in the heart*, springing up unto everlasting life—flowing forever—and ending in life everlasting, which alone can realize its full benefits.

15. This was such a commendation

Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband :

18 For thou hast had five hus-

of what He had to give, that she could no longer hesitate to ask it of Him. It would, at least, save her the trouble of coming constantly to draw, at that well. Oh! how much severer trouble, heart trouble, it would save her, she did not yet understand. So our Lord gently leads her into the truth—taking her up at the lowest point, and from her carnal perceptions drawing her along by divine constraints to heavenly realities. From the following verses, we infer that beyond the meaning of this to us all, there was a special application to this woman who had been vainly going “to the broken cisterns of carnal lust.” OBSERVE.—1st. Christ is the fountain of all grace and peace, and every blessing. 2d. The religion of Christ is an unfailing supply for all times and necessities. 3d. The true Christian has his sources of happiness within the soul—in the hope and joy and peace which Christ gives, as “the unspeakable gift of God.” “Christ in him, the hope of glory.” 4th. It is a living resource when all earthly springs are dry. 5th. It is life. The true believer in Christ hath everlasting life in possession. It is everlasting in its nature. He has now the beginning of it, and it ends in life everlasting.

16. *Go call thy husband.* This is His first step in granting her request, though, alas, she little understood it so. His first work is to convince her of sin. This is the first business of the Comforter whom He now gives. (ch. 16. ) He was also taking the same method as with Nathanael, to show His

bands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive <sup>a</sup> that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; <sup>b</sup> and ye say, that in Jerusalem <sup>c</sup> is the place where men ought to worship.

a c. 1. 48, 49 b Ju. 9. 7. c De. 12. 5-11. 1 Ki. 9. 3.

omniscience, by disclosing his perfect knowledge of her case and history. (ch. 1: 48, 49.)

17. This was nothing new to our Lord. He perfectly knew her whole life of sin, but this was her vain attempt to cover the facts by her equivocation. She spoke the literal truth, and our Lord exposed the case as being to her shame—the more true, the more disgraceful.

18. *Five husbands.* She had had so many, *lawfully*, no doubt, as distinguished from this *sixth* one, who was not lawful, but she had left them, perhaps unlawfully, or they had been divorced from her, or had died. ¶ *Truly.* Literally, “This *true* thing thou hast said,” This one thing is *true*.

19. This discriminating knowledge of her case opens her eyes, as it probably also wakens her conscience. ¶ *A Prophet.* *A Divine teacher*—not necessarily one who foretells future events. Here she virtually confesses that His account of her case was true, though she did not own Him to be the Messiah. (ch. 6: 14, 15.) She saw only that He must be from God. She had got only as far as Nicodemus was when he first came to Christ.

20. Possibly she was so far convinced of His Divine mission, as to seek some instruction about acceptable worship. Or, perhaps before accepting any religion from Him, she would, naturally enough, fall back upon the old difficulty between their worship and the Jews. So, commonly, when men are convinced of sin, they put forth the objections to one or another

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when \*ye shall neither in this moun-

α Mal. 1. 11. Matt. 18. 20.

church as an excuse, or the inconsistencies of professors, or the doubtful forms of worship in use. They take a momentary refuge behind "the sects" in the church, or often pass from one excuse to the other. ¶ *Our fathers.* Our Samaritan fathers, or perhaps meaning the patriarchs, and thus reflecting upon the Jews. ¶ *This mountain.* Mount Gerizim, which she could point to, rising very near to Jacob's well, where they sat, and overlooking the town of Sychar. On the summit the Samaritans had erected their temple, while the Jews had built theirs at Jerusalem. See Neh. 13 : 28. It was destroyed B. C. 129, by John Hyrcanus. We saw on the summit a small chamber, where the priest officiated to the sixty-seven Samaritans at that passover. Gerizim was the Mount of blessing, and Ebal the Mount of curse. Their copy of the five books of Moses has Gerizim, instead of Ebal, in Deut. 27 : 4. Some travelers imagine that Ebal is more barren-looking than the other, but it is scarcely so. The ascent of Gerizim we found most stony and difficult with horses. The massive ruins on the summit are judged to be the remains of a castle, erected by Justinian. The walls are about ten feet in thickness, and we wandered over huge heaps of grey granite beveled stones, ready to believe that it might have been their ancient temple, though they do not so regard it. They show you the place near these ruins, where they say are the twelve stones, brought up by Israel from the Jordan. They believe that on that Mount, also, Abraham was directed to offer up Isaac, and that *there*, not on Moriah, that interesting event occurred. They call it the holy mountain, and turn their faces toward it in prayer. ¶ *Ye say.* Ye Jews, in opposition to the Samaritans, say that the place for Divine worship, appointed by God, is in Jerusalem. The rivalry and hatred

tain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship <sup>b</sup> ye know not

β 2 Ki. 17. 29.

between the two people was so great, that the Samaritans would not allow the common hospitalities of their country to our Lord and His disciples when they would pass through their land, because their face was as though they would go to Jerusalem. Luke 9 : 53. ¶ *Jerusalem.* On "Mount Zion," as it was commonly called—including Moriah, which was more properly the site, the temple of Solomon was built. The name "Moriah" seldom occurs. The two hills are adjacent and only separated by the Tyropeon. A bridge connected the temple with Zion, and the ruins of it still remain. The massive stones *jut out* from the wall, broken off, at the springing of the arch, but showing plainly their connection with that bridge, as described by Josephus. We examined the remarkable manner in which they are morticed into the immense stones of the temple wall. See Notes on Luke, and Plate.

21. Our Lord answers her that all these differences are of small account. The forms are not the essentials. The heart is that which is chiefly required in worship. ¶ *Neither.* That is, *not only* here or there—not in any place *exclusively*. Our Lord here perhaps referred to the success that would attend the Gospel in Samaria. Acts 8. ¶ *The Father.* God the Father, who is so superior to their father Jacob.

22. Our Lord now shows that the Jewish worship alone was the true, and in this He spake as a Jew. ¶ *Ye worship.* The Samaritans received only the Pentateuch—rejected the further revelations of God by His prophets. Therefore they had not the oracles, and covenants, &c., (Rom. 3 : 1, 2,) as the Jews had, and they had no proper, full knowledge of God, as He had revealed Himself for an object of intelligent worship. ¶ *What.* He does not say *whom*, for the question was not about a true or false God—but *what*—as though their views of worship altogeth-

what: we know what we worship; for<sup>a</sup> salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worship-

<sup>a</sup> Is. 2. 3. Ro. 9. 5.

pers shall worship the Father in Spirit<sup>b</sup> and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

<sup>b</sup> Ph. 3. 3.

er, were vague, and without any clear idea of God's personal revelations, and certainly without any true idea of God in Christ, or of the Messiah, who was revealed so especially in the prophets. Their separate worship had its origin in sinful spite. Their independent temple set up there was contrary to the Divine appointment which fixed the sanctuary upon Zion. 2 Sam. 7: 2, 13. 1 Kings, 5: 5, 12; 8: 15-22. They therefore cut themselves loose from the Saviour, and from salvation, which is of the Jews "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Rom. 9: 5. They have kept up to this day their separate pretension, and look vainly for a "Guide," or "Teacher." ¶ *We know.* This clause is made to correspond with the former, so as to show the contrast in stronger light—*we know what.* This advantage the Jews had—the law and the covenants, and the worship of God, and the promises. Rom. 3: 1, 2. ¶ *We worship.* Speaking as a Jew here, He includes Himself and in this instance alone. ¶ *For.* The reason here assigned for their better knowledge and more assured confidence in Divine worship, is, that "*the salvation*" promised and expected, is of the Jews, belongs to their nation as having it promised to them, and sprung from them, and from them the Messiah had already sprung. Luke 2: 30, 3, 6. ¶ *Is of the Jews.* Not *is to be*, for Christ had already appeared.

23. This verse connects with vs. 21, and further sets forth the true spiritual worship. ¶ *Now is.* The time has arrived for setting aside distinctions of places, and of forms, in comparison with the worship of the heart. This He mentions lest she should think that the spiritual worship was to be set up in Judea. It is *now* and *here* and *everywhere*, the great requisite. ¶ *True.* As distinguished from the false who

were so many, and from former *formal* worshippers generally, who went so much on a different principle. ¶ *In spirit.* As distinguished from mere form without the soul of devotion. ¶ *Truth.* The requisite is "*In spirit and in truth*," not "*In this mountain*." The worship which Christ would establish, was above such narrow restrictions of place. He says, "*In every place*," (Mal. 1: 11,) incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering." These *true* worshippers would be distinct both from the mere formal Jews and from the false Samaritans. They would worship in *truth*, as distinct from Jewish forms and ceremonies which were *shadows of the true*, and as distinct from a false worship unauthorized by God, such as that of the Samaritans. His would be worship in the highest sense—the genuine—the real. This intimates that all mere formal worship is more or less false and not true. It has a pretence and show that are not answered to by the reality. It makes great outward appearance of worship, but does not truly worship God—and often does not worship the true God—but some false notion of God—or even some image or idol instead of God. ¶ *For.* The reason is that the Father—the Jehovah whom they acknowledged, had so revealed His will, and never could be satisfied with a mere external service. Especially would He soon demolish the boasted Jewish Temple, and require universal worship. Mal. 3. ¶ *Seeketh.* Is seeking. This again expresses the tender solicitude of God for us, and for our proper service. He knows what is sincere worship, springing from the heart and soul, and engaging all the affections, and such worship and worshippers He seeks. God is seeking us more than we are seeking Him. As the shepherd seeks the lost sheep,



24 God <sup>a</sup> is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. 3. 17.

and the woman the lost coin, so He seeks us for His service and glory. Ps. 144: 18.

24. This requirement of spiritual worship is founded on God's spiritual essence. "*God is Spirit.*" So far as this could refer to the Mosaic worship, it shows that even in *that*, God sought and required, not merely the form but chiefly the Spirit, and the Spirit in and through the form. And now, in the worship of the new covenant He is seeking a more spiritual service. So the clause may properly read: as the reference is not to His personality, but to His essential nature. This is His essence—*pure spirit*—not confined, as we are, to place or to a material body, but invisible, and everywhere present. To approach God acceptably *in spirit*, we must be made His temple. This suggests the gift of the Holy Spirit for this end. The expression "*the Father*," brings to view, also, the "new birth" by the Holy Ghost. See ch. 3. This passage, therefore, forms a conclusion to the subject of these first chapters. "God is become one flesh with us that we might become one Spirit with Him. He requires what is agreeable to His Divine nature. So He is Truth, and requires *truth*: not parade pretension or pomp, without sincerity and spirituality. Thus Stephen reasoned with the Jews. Acts 7: 48. So Saul argued on Mars' Hill, in regard to heathen temples. Acts 17: 25.

25. But, if God be pure Spirit, how can He be approached? This seems to suggest to her the idea of the Messiah, as the medium of understanding and approaching God. She yielded readily to His teaching, as to God's requiring a more excellent worship and abolishing the old. But she intimates that this must be deferred till the Messiah comes. She at least seems to have a

which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, <sup>b</sup> I that speak unto thee am *he*.

<sup>b</sup> c. 9. 37.

general idea of something great and excellent as promised, which would be clearly explained by the expected Messiah. OBSERVE.—This expectation of a Messiah, by Samaritans, as well as Jews, shows that it was no recent idea, but ancient; and that, as these people were hostile to each other, it was derived not from each other, but from a common source, which could have been only the Books of Moses received alike by both. The Samaritans, too, seem to have looked for the Messiah as a *Teacher* rather than as a political Conqueror—they seem, also, to have looked upon the Mosaic law as not permanent, but temporary; and as to pass away when Christ should come. ¶ *Called Christ.* These are probably the words of the woman, alluding to the popular name of the Messiah among them—as *Christ* is the Greek term meaning the same as *Messiah* in the Hebrew. ¶ *Tell.* Will declare by Divine authority, as "the Prophet, like Moses." Deut. 18: 15.

26. This is our Lord's first declaration of Himself as the Messiah. Some wonder that He should have done this when He forbade others to make Him known so early. But this case was different from theirs. It would have periled His life in some instances, but it did not in this. It led to the conversion of many. vs. 39. He knew all things, and suited Himself to the circumstances as to when, where, and how far He should make Himself known. ¶ *That speak.* "I am He who am now speaking unto thee," and "*telling thee*," as you expect to be told by the Messiah. This refers to her words as she had confessed. See vs. 29. OBSERVE.—I. How early our Lord here declared Himself to the Samaritans who were not His people. His heart burned for all the world, even for those

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no

man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her

who hated Him, and refused Him their hospitality. 2. John alone records this remarkable proof of Christ's Godhead, as this is His great object. 3. How beautifully our Lord improved this occasion of delivering to this woman the truth of His salvation. It was as they incidentally met—though she did not know Him. It was not with harsh denunciation that he treated her, though she was in error. It was no rash, offensive, abrupt dragging in of the subject. It was delicately, prudently done. 4. Religion gives more than it asks for. He asked for water, and gave her the water of life. It does not even appear whether He obtained the water He asked for, or not. It is so much more important to show that she obtained the grace and salvation that she had not sought. Christianity is worth more than it costs. 5. Christ seeks us more than we seek Him. If He had not sought us first, we had never sought or found Him.

“To Him that sought us first  
Before the world began.”

5. Christ never announced Himself more clearly even to the disciples, than He did to the Samaritan woman.

27. *Upon this.* Just as He said this. ¶ *Marvelled.* They wondered that He spoke with the woman—because she was a Samaritan. Some suppose, also, that it was because she was a woman; and the Rabbins despised the female sex as utterly without religious knowledge. In the Talmud it is said, “No one salutes a woman.” “He who instructs his daughter in the law is like one who acts the fool.” But, rather, they marveled because He took the trouble to speak with evident interest, to one whom as Jews they could only despise and hate. ¶ *No man.* No one of the disciples. They asked no questions about the matter, not willing to pry into His plans, though they wondered at Him. We may learn a lesson not to ask for the *why* and *wherefore* of

God's ways, though we may marvel. We are to be satisfied that what He does is right, even if we do not fully understand. ¶ *What seekest thou.* They neither made this inquiry of the woman, nor did they ask Christ, “Why talkest thou with her?”

28. It was our Lord's whole conversation that convinced her—and not merely His last words declaring Himself to be the Messiah. She had been impressed by His “telling her all things,” as she was led to expect of the Messiah, (vs. 25,) and she could plainly see that He was divine from His omniscience. His announcement of Himself as the Messiah makes her think now more seriously of what He had told her of herself. **OBSERVE.**—She leads others as Christ led her. She makes no assertions except of her own experience—and upon this she would have others come and see for themselves, and judge as to the great question. We are to leave all for Christ's service. 1. She left her present earthly concerns for the greater concerns of the soul. These led her to forget her errand, and her natural thirst was lost in her greater thirst for divine things. 2. She hastened as soon as she found Christ, to make Him known to others. Not to reproach or dictate to them, but to invite them to come with her and see what she had seen, and judge. 3. She—a woman—dared to publish Christ to the *men*, who thought themselves far superior to her. True religion emboldens women to do what they can properly do, in making Christ known in society—by speaking of Him to others whom they meet—by distributing tracts and teaching in the Sabbath School. But it does not lead them to public preaching or teaching in the church, which the Scripture forbids. True religion will never lead any beyond their proper sphere. 4. True conviction and repentance must spring from proper

water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 In the mean-while his disci-

ples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My<sup>a</sup>

a Job. 23. 12. c. 6. 38.

views of God. It is only when we understand Christ's declarations of Himself as the Redeemer, that we properly understand His declarations of ourselves as the sinners that we are.

29. Christ's deep, inward knowledge of her heart and life convinced her of His being God. So we soon find that the religion of Christ is made by the same God who made our souls, and understands all our lives. We find that it is every way so perfectly suited to us, as no one but the heart-searching God could devise. When she finds that He who had told her of her sins is the Messiah, she goes away with eager interest, thinking more of the Christ she had found, than of her sins which He had exposed. So we are to rejoice at finding Christ rather than to be so oppressed with our sins as to forget His preciousness. Our sins are to be thought of to make us wonder at His grace, and glad and grateful at finding Him. ¶ *Told me.* So Nathanael was convinced of Christ's Messiahship by His Divine knowledge of him, and of his secret ways. Ch. 1. ¶ *Is not this, &c.* She speaks modestly—but puts forward the plain evidence which she had received, as sufficient to satisfy any—and yet would have them experience for themselves. She also would be glad to have their experience in confirmation of her faith. John's object being to present the various proofs of Christ's Godhead, gives here the very grounds on which one of a hostile nation, was led to believe and publish the great truth—just as Nathanael of the devout Jews had done.

30. *And came.* Rather, they *were*

coming, but had not yet reached Him, when what follows occurred.

31. As the woman left her water pot and seemed to forget her natural thirst, so Christ seemed to forget His natural hunger. This was the beginning of His labors outside of the boundaries of Israel, and His soul was deeply exercised in it. So it was when the Greeks came to Him at the feast. Ch. 12: 23-33. ¶ *Eat.* The disciples had brought the food which they had gone to the city to procure. They accordingly set it before Him, and urged Him to eat. This seems to imply, also, that He seemed not as ready to take food as might have been expected from His natural want. Therefore they urge Him to eat.

32. *I have meat.* The term rendered *meat*, means *food* of any kind. See vs. 34. His meaning was, that He was engaged in a work that was more pleasant to Him, than bodily food: a work for which He had the strongest relish, and a work which was to Him, instead of all common and physical gratifications—though they had no proper idea of it.

33. They do not understand His meaning. They think only of His having a supply from some other quarter. He proceeds to enlighten them. How amazingly does He bear with our ignorance and willful blindness, and lead us into His truth, "bearing long with us."

34. *My meat is.* Here He explains. His whole living—His proper food and sustenance, His whole life and relish, was to do His Father's will—as he intimated, already, when a boy in the Temple. It was then already more to

meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish <sup>a</sup> his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh

*a c. 17. 4.*

Him than earthly parents or home. Luke 2: 49. See Job 23: 12. ¶ *To do.* Literally, *in order that I may do.* My whole aim and satisfaction is this—not merely the obedience itself, but the *work*, that I may *carry forward* the great work of Redemption, step by step, to completion. ch. 6: 38. He would show that He had a high object in all His travels, and conversations, and miracles—an object far above the satisfying of natural hunger, and that for this end He had been employed even in their absence. He was intent on the great work of giving salvation to perishing sinners—and all his actions aimed at that result. He was advancing that great object in teaching this poor woman. And soon on the cross He would say “It is finished.”

35. It was four months in Judea from sowing seed till harvest. Our Lord refers to this common saying. In Palestine the seed is commonly sown in November to December, and January. The four or five months that elapsed from the sowing till the harvest was a remarkably quick reaping, in comparison with many lands. But in His work the harvest is even more speedy. It is immediato. No sooner was the seed of Divine truth sown in some hearts, than it sprang up—as in case of this woman. The great spiritual harvest—the reaping of souls for heaven was at hand, in connexion with His work, which He was so anxious to finish. vs. 35. It is not necessary to suppose that it was harvest time when our Lord spake these words, though it may have been—and through the picture He may have urged the higher truth on their attention, as He often did. Some suppose it was the seed-time, taking the proverbial saying for the *fact*, at the time. But had this been His meaning, that it was only four months to harvest from the time when

harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to <sup>b</sup> harvest.

*b Matt. 9. 37.*

He spoke, He would not have so introduced the remark—“*Say not ye.*” ¶ *Look.* Our Lord would animate them by the bright prospect. Many of the people were thronging to Him from the city, at the report of the woman. He may have pointed to these, whose eager coming and prompt believing, was proof of the readiness of the great field to be reaped, as soon as the seed was sown. Or He may have referred generally to the successes that would more and more attend His gospel. Matt. 9: 37; 13: 3. ¶ *White.* Just as grain when it ripens and is ready to be reaped, turns to a bright yellow or whitish color; so here, the time for ingathering had come, and the indications were plain. *Pentecost*, the feast of first fruits of harvest, was the time of the Spirit's outpouring, and the commencement of a higher, happier ingathering, as had been promised of old. OBSERVE—1. The encouragements for laboring in the spiritual field, by sowing the good seed of the word and kingdom, are far greater than the farmer has for planting the soil. We may be sure of a harvest—and, in our Lord's time, the results will be far more prompt, and we shall reap speedily. 2. The world is the great field that now waits to be sown and reaped, and we are to lift up our eyes, and see the indications, and pray for the laborers that are so urgently needed. 3. We may be sure that earnest, prayerful effort is our business. We are to plant and to water faithfully—and God, whose prerogative it is to give the increase, will do it, as He has promised. 5. The consummation of God's purposes of grace is hastening. We live amidst the last days. The prophecies are fast accomplishing. Laborers in Christ's spiritual field may look for glorious results—even more so than at the introduction of Christianity.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit <sup>a</sup> unto life eternal; that both <sup>b</sup> he that

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 6: 22. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 5-9.

36. The encouragement which our Lord presents to His disciples, is this—that they shall *reap* in *due season* if they *faint not*—and this is the reason why they should not be weary in well-doing. He would incite them to a cheerful, hopeful spirit in their great gospel work, which he would soon entrust so to their hands. ¶ *Reapeth.* They would be *reapers*—the harvest was already so ripe—the promise was so graciously sure. And this reaping of fruit, and such fruit, was promised them as *wages*—souls they should have for their hire. The *wages* will therefore be great, and satisfactory, because it will be unto *life Eternal*, like the fruit. This will be the joy of successful teaching and preaching in the gospel service—the results will be eternal—the fruit reaped and harvested will be *of souls*, for Eternity. The wages therefore—the joy and rejoicing will be Eternal. See vs. 37. ¶ *He that soweth.* The plan is, “*that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together,*” over the eternal fruits of their labors. Therefore it is to be understood that *the sower* also receiveth wages, and even they, who like those disciples, should rather *reap* the ripened harvest, would receive wages also, for gathering in the fruit—and thus both sower and reaper would rejoice together—they would share together in the joy. OBSERVE—Our Lord rejoiced over one repenting sinner—He therefore did not lose any opportunity with any. How much was reaped from that incidental sowing at the well? How large a crop and how speedy a harvest. If all His disciples would enter into His spirit, as sowers and reapers—improving every opportunity—always looking at the fields and watching the indications, how much would surely be accomplished!

37. *That saying.* Our Lord here refers to a proverbial saying in com-

soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying

mon use—that the sower is one and the reaper another, and not the same person—meaning that often a man may sow the seed, and not himself reap the harvest, but another shall do it. Such a Greek proverb was in use, and the Hebrews had a similar one. Isa. 65: 21, 22; See also Micah 6: 15. This would be fulfilled in their case. The plans of grace had been long coming to maturity. The preparations of the great field which is the world, had been long making by the prophets, and by John Baptist, and by Himself. Already they were in “the latter days,” prophesied of. ¶ *To reap.* They would have the privilege of reaping the fruit of other men’s labors. Their share in the preparations was comparatively nothing. ¶ *Other men.* The chief reference here is to our Lord Himself, as laboriously preparing the way for their harvest, according to the plan of grace. The general principle admits of general terms. But He looks upon their work as though it were accomplished, while it is the accomplishment to which He urges them, from these encouraging considerations. OBSERVE—How honored is the Christian ministry in this view—that it is an entering into the fruits of Christ’s labors. Even the Sabbath school teacher becomes a reaper of rich fruit, because Christ has died and preached the gospel to men—and purchased the Spirit’s influence to accompany the truth to salvation. We may reap what He has sown. We may sow, for He prepares the soil. And so, also, Christ and the humblest teacher or preacher of the Gospel, will rejoice together with joy and singing over the eternal fruits. 2. No matter how we may be called to labor in the great field, whether as sowers or as reapers—whether in laying foundations or in carrying up the structure, we shall have a share in the eternal joy. We are to go forth bearing precious seed, and even though *weeping* as

true, One <sup>a</sup> soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other <sup>b</sup> men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying<sup>c</sup> of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

Mt. 6. 15.    b 1 Pe. 1. 12.    ever. 29.

we go, we shall come again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. Ps. 126: 6. 3. There is a work of sowing seed which is most important to be done, and without which there can be no harvest. The humble labors of the Sabbath school teacher, and of the private Christian, and of the faithful tract distributor, are valuable auxiliaries to the ministerial work. [For remarks on vs. 39-43, see *Appendix*.

## § 26. JESUS TEACHES PUBLICLY IN GALILEE.

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
|       |       |       | 4. 43-45. |

43. *After two.* Literally—*after the two days*, vs. 40. So short a time He spent among the Samaritans. He showed thus His preference for Galilee, and perhaps He feared lest His longer stay might give His own people occasion for jealousy, and lead them to use the Proverb against Him, “Physician, heal thyself.” Luke 4: 23.

44. *For.* This verse refers to the following narrative, and explains beforehand what is said in vs. 48. He went thither, not because they were better, or more ready to receive Him than the Samaritans, but rather the contrary. Neither did He go expecting any welcome that He did not receive—for He knew what was in them—and He testified, on certain

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for <sup>d</sup> we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

¶ 43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that <sup>e</sup> a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

d c. 17. 8.    1 Jno. 4. 14.    e Matt. 13. 57.    Mar. 6. 4.    Luke 4. 24.

(subsequent) occasions, what was to be expected by a prophet in his own country. Luke 4: 24; Mark 6: 4; Matt. 13: 57. But *this rather led Him to go*. He chose wicked Galilee for His public ministry, where He was to be rejected by His own townspeople at Nazareth. A people so disposed toward Him, would be the first to blame Him for staying too long among the Samaritans. Yet, by His persevering labors amidst persecution and rejection, many believed on Him. ¶ *His own country.* This was Galilee; for though He was born at Bethlehem, He was “*brought up*” at Nazareth. Nor would the proverb apply equally to Bethlehem, for there he had not been so familiarly known, as to have these objections brought up on account of His humble origin. Some, however, understand that John, whose aim is to record more especially the ministry of our Lord in Judea, speaks of this as *His own country*, in contrast with Galilee—since He was, indeed, born in Judea and returned to Nazareth, instead of Bethlehem, only by divine direction. But the objection to such an understanding is, that our Lord applied this proverb to *Galilee*, as “*His own country*,” and to His reception there. Luke 4: 23, 24; Matt. 13: 57. This surely fixes the reference in *this* passage, where the Evangelist seems to bring forward

45 Then, when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen <sup>a</sup> all the things that he did at Jerusalem, at the feast: for <sup>b</sup> they also went unto the feast.

a c. 2. 23. b De. 16. 16.

those very instances of its application by our Lord, as also suited to this occasion. It shows that our Lord referred more than once to Galilee, as "*His own country.*" It must be remarked, however, that our Lord introduced His ministry in Judea, and at Jerusalem, as He afterwards commanded His apostles to do. Nor did He turn aside to Galilee until His own people had shown their aversion to Him, and the Pharisees had imprisoned John the Baptist; nor indeed, until the report of His gaining more disciples than John, was about centering their cruel enmity upon Him, as the next victim. Galilee, therefore, was His own country. Thither He went from the persecution of His own Judea. And this had been already foreshadowed in the divine direction on the return from Egypt, that they should "turn aside into the parts of Galilee." Matt. 2: 22. This, therefore, was always the course of Christianity, "beginning at Jerusalem." Acts 1: 4. He came unto His own, (country) and His own (people) received Him not. But as many as received Him, (though not "His own," in the same sense,) to them He gave the privilege, rank, of sons of God—even to believers, of whatever land or name. ch. 1: 11, 12. Hence, the proverb in question really applied to both countries—to Judea, where it had first been tested, and to Galilee, where it was afterwards proved. And we might, in this light, understand the Evangelist as throwing in here our Lord's use of the proverb in regard to Galilee, as applicable, in his view, to His turning aside from Judea, on this occasion. Observe, also, He had gone from the Jews to the Samaritans, and thence to the Galileans, just as He directed the apostles to do in establish-

¶ 46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made <sup>c</sup> the water wine. And there was a certain <sup>1</sup> nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

c c. 2. 1, 11. 1 or, *courtier*; or, *ruler*.

ing His church, and as *they did*. Acts 1: 8; 8: 5.

45. *Received.* The Evangelist proceeds to record His reception in the light of the proverb which influenced His return. *Therefore*—accordingly—when He came into Galilee, the Galileans received Him—not with any genuine faith, but simply under the impulse of sense—and from their sight of His miracle. vs. 48. Such a reception it was that He was distrustful of, and He would not confide Himself to such. ch. 2: 23. It is noted here, also, in connection with the last verse, to indicate the contrast between the Samaritans who believed Him for His *word*, and the Galileans (His own people,) who received Him merely on account of His *miracles*, which they had seen at Jerusalem. ¶ *For they.* This explanatory clause is added by John for the information of such as did not know their custom, and this explains how the Galileans had witnessed the miracles which He wrought at Jerusalem. ch. 2: 23.

#### § 27. JESUS AGAIN AT CANA, AND HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 4. 46-54. |

46. *So.* That is, on account of their being so influenced by His miracles. Though this was not the best kind of faith, our Lord was always ready to meet people "a great way off," (Luke 15: 20,) and lead them along from the first beginnings of interest in Him, even when at first they were influenced only by low and worldly views. So it was with Zaccheus and the Samaritan woman. ¶ *Where He made.* See ch. 2.

¶ *Nobleman.* βασιλικός. This term is used by Josephus to distinguish the

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him,

Except ye see signs<sup>a</sup> and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go<sup>b</sup> thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus

a 1 Cor. 1. 22. b Matt. 8. 13. Mar. 7. 29, 30. Lu. 17. 14

officers of the kings (as Herod's) from those of Rome, (Caesar's). This man may have been Chuza, Herod's steward; (Luke 8: 3,) but this is conjecture. He appears to have been a Jew.

¶ *At Capernaum.* The site of Cana and Capernaum is involved in doubt. If Cana be—as Dr. Robinson contends—not *Kefr Kenna*, but *Cana-el-Jelil*, about six miles N. of Nazareth, it was within an easy day's travel of Capernaum, supposing that to have been Khan Minyeh, as Dr. R. supposes. Or, even if Capernaum were the present *Tell Hum*, as most believe, Cana was within a day's journey.

47. *Come out of Judea.* This seems to imply that he had heard of our Lord's miracles at Jerusalem, and perhaps had been at the feast (vs. 45,) and seen what He had done there.

¶ *Come down.* The man seems to have thought it necessary that Jesus should go to Capernaum to work the miracle. In this he showed low views, though his faith was strong enough to make him go to Jesus.

48. *Except ye see.* This is not to distinguish the nobleman's faith from the people's, but rather to include his weak faith with their's. These words seem addressed to them all, for our Lord saw the defect of his faith as it again appears in His reply. He means to say that they would not believe, as the Samaritans did, by His simple preaching, but they must have miracles wrought, (1 Cor. 1: 22,) and even His miracles would not secure their faith—but these also were rejected. ch. 12: 37. And yet they must have more miracles. So the tempter in the wilderness insisted on Christ's working miracles to satisfy His unreasonable, unbelieving demands. So His cruci-

fiers at the cross taunted Him with such challenges, when they would not believe any sooner if He had met their new requirement. So also it is that common unbelievers in our day, would make their own terms—are never satisfied with the ample evidences and proofs of Christianity—and call for new demonstrations, as though none had been made.

49. *Come down.* He could not believe there was such omnipotence in the Great Healer, as could dispense with His *going down* to where the sick child was. ¶ *Ere my child die.* Much less could the man think of any possibility of Christ's raising the child *after death*. He must *come down*, and He must do it *soon*, or it would be forever too late—the child would be dead.

50. Beheld the readiness of the blessed Saviour to meet the inquirer a great way off. As He would not break the bruised reed, at Jacob's well, so He would not quench the dim candlewick here. Isa. 42: 3. Notwithstanding such inadequate views, and such narrow faith, the Lord receives the nobleman more than the nobleman receives Him—and He works the sign that was needed for his fuller conviction, rather than send him empty away. He put his faith to the test in the very point where it was weakest. And it is plain, that just as He gave strength to the man of the withered hand, when He commanded him to *stretch it forth*, so here He gave faith to the nobleman when He commanded him to *go his way*, and believe that his son was restored without His bodily presence. ¶ *Thy son liveth.* The anxious father said that the child was "at the point of death"—*dying*—and considered that in all likelihood the child might be



had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth.

already dead. But Christ gave this strong assurance—it was living, and would live and not die, in this sickness. And moreover, He intimated that these words of His carried authority, as they did, to send fresh life to the dying child, and give to it the elements of recovery, at that very moment. vs. 52, 53. OBSERVE.—In the centurion's case, (Matt. 8,) where, from humility, the man requests Him to speak the word only, He offers to go to his house. Here, where the weak faith of the applicant requires Him to go down to the house, He speaks the word only.—*Alford*. Thus the weak faith of the nobleman is strengthened, while the humility of the centurion is honored. ¶ *Believed*—that is, in *Jesus*—not merely in His word, but in *Him*.—*Trench*. Here our Lord was working a mightier miracle in the nobleman's heart, than He promised to do in the child. The great marvel is, that these words of Jesus, without any convincing sign, should so have satisfied the man. What he needed more than signs or wonders, (though he knew it not,) was the inward working of divine power in his heart. ¶ *The word*. He believed *Christ's word*. This gave him peace. He went homeward in comfort. Ps. 130: 5.

51. *As he was now going*. How beautifully he was furnished with assurance, when he went forward with confidence in Christ's word. Just as the lepers were healed on the way to do Christ's bidding, so here, Christ blesses the first, faintest step of obedience and confidence, and gives more assurance. The joyful message came to him in the way of faith and obedience. So always the sweet comforts of the gospel come to us in the way of believing Christ's word, and acting upon it.

52. Doubtless now he was ready at once to give the credit of his child's recovery to Christ—though he proba-

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was*

bly had not expected to hear of it so wonderfully and so soon. In order to make sure of the facts, he inquired into the particulars. Such inquiry does not imply doubt in us, but a desire to have the fullest knowledge of Christ's faithfulness from careful inquiry into our affairs. ¶ *Seventh hour*. This was one o'clock in the afternoon. He had twenty-five miles to go to Capernaum, which he could reach the same evening. But he was now in the next day. Therefore it would seem he was going leisurely and calmly (trusting). "He that believeth shall not make haste."

53. *The same hour*. Our Lord was fully believed on this positive, mathematical proof—from *the watch*—that the child's recovery was owing to His word. ¶ *And his whole house*. The Evangelist had thus shown the divine glory of Christ in this further instance, and, as is usual, the whole house is spoken of as having become a Christian house by this saving change of the parent. The household covenant is thus referred to, and God's established dealing with men by which He transmits His religion in families and by means of a pious posterity. OBSERVE.—1. How Christ encourages the weakest faith, so that none need hold back for more correct feelings. 2. Though He may not grant our prayers precisely in the manner we suggest or expect, He will answer us in His own way, and prove His faithfulness. 3. We are to believe *Christ's word*, however contrary it may seem to our understanding. This brings peace, and we go on our way rejoicing, and are not disappointed. Christ's word never yet has failed. 4. It is in the way of faith and obedience that we are met by the good news which takes away our remaining doubts and fears. vs. 51. 5. We are to do our Lord the justice to inquire into His dealings

at the same <sup>a</sup> hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, <sup>b</sup> and his whole house.

54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 107. 20. <sup>b</sup> Ac. 16. 34; 18. 8.

with us, and credit Him for His goodness and grace toward us. vs. 52. Thus only it is that we see fully the astonishing deliverances wrought out for us by our Lord, and are led into the fullest confidence, and the most unmixed devotedness. 6. It is often by sickness in the family that a whole household is brought to God. 7. God honors parental piety, and loves family religion. A parent's faith is thus often accompanied or followed by that of his house.

54. *The second.* As the Evangelist had noted the miracle at Cana as the first that Jesus did, so here he notices this as the *second*. Both showed His tender regard for us—to furnish our table and to heal our sick—to turn our water into wine, and to heal a son at the point of death. He began with family miracles, preaching thus to households, and manifesting His glory to interested groups, rather than to single individuals. John has thus further set forth our Lord's divinity. "For to restore life and health to a dying person, at a distance, and by a simple act of volition, and at the same moment to have a perfect knowledge of His recovery, was surely a most convincing proof of divine power and omniscience."—*Tittman*.

#### PART IV.

*Our Lord's Second Passover, and onward to the Third.*

Time, one year.

#### CHAPTER V.

§ 36. THE POOL OF BETHESDA, THE HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN, AND OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE.

|       |       |       |          |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|       |       |       | 5. 1-47. |

It is to be observed that after the miracle of healing the nobleman's son,

he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

#### CHAPTER V.

¶ AFTER this there was a feast <sup>c</sup> of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>c</sup> Le. 23. 2, &c. De. 16. 16. c. 2. 13.

our Lord went to Nazareth, where He was rejected, and then fixed His abode in Capernaum. After that He called the two pairs of brothers—Simon and Andrew, James and John—at the sea of Galilee, to be *Apostles* as He had before called them to be *disciples*, (ch. 1: 40, 41,) healed a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, and Peter's wife's mother, &c., and went throughout Galilee with His disciples—healed a leper and a paralytic, and called Matthew. He comes now to Jerusalem. See Harmony, Matt.

1. *After this.* Literally, *after these things*. This phraseology implies the lapse of considerable time. When an immediate succession of events is intended, John uses the phrase, "After this," which is different. ¶ *A feast.* Much doubt is expressed by many commentators as to what feast this was. On this will depend the question of how long our Lord's ministry continued. If this be the Passover, besides the other three mentioned by John, the time of our Lord's ministry must have been three and a half years. See Dan. 9: 27. Otherwise, one year less. See ch. 2: 3; ch. 6: 4. There would seem very weighty reasons (with few solid objections) for considering it the Feast of the Passover. One of the chief objections to this, is the omission of the article in the text. But similar instances occur elsewhere, as Matt. 27: 13; Mark 15: 6; Luke 23: 17. It is further urged, that it would make a year between this chapter and the next, where a Passover is also spoken of. This is of no weight, as John did not aim at a full or continuous narrative. But further it is said, that as He did not go to the next Passover, (ch. 6: ) this would make our Lord to have been absent from Jerusalem a

2 Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep<sup>1</sup> *market*, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

1 or, *gate*. Ne. 3. 1; 12. 39.

year and six months, which could scarcely have been, consistently with His strict observance of the Jewish law. But this would be accounted for by their going about to kill Him. The plucking of the ears of grain by the disciples, (§ 37, Luke 6: 1, 5;) shows that a Passover had just been kept. This was also the understanding of the early church, as Irenæus, &c.: though on account of the indefiniteness of the terms, almost every one of the Jewish feasts has been argued for, in this connection, by the more recent commentators. There is nothing recorded in the chapter, which would make it necessary to allude to the time or nature of the feast. Hence it is not specified; though as this was the great feast of the Jews, it was commonly called *the feast*, and here *a feast* emphatically. ¶ *Went up*. He went up from Capernaum, where he called Matthew. Mark 2: 13, 14. § 35.

2. *There is*. The present tense here, leads some to maintain that this narrative was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. But this is no proof, as it was doubtless according to his habit of describing a locality, which he was so familiar with—and, indeed, the pool, the gate, &c., were yet existing as localities of Jerusalem, when he wrote—although, as we suppose, the city had been destroyed by Titus, before this time. The pool itself is generally pointed out as that walled enclosure near St. Stephen's gate, which is dry and in appearance much like the Pool of Siloam. It is some three hundred and sixty feet long, one hundred and thirty broad, and seventy-five feet deep to the rubbish, which has long accumulated. We observed the tops of two arched vaults at the south-west corner. One of these is twelve feet broad and the other nineteen or twenty feet. These are the doorways to chambers,

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

one of which Dr. Robinson traced for more than one hundred feet, and thinks these were vaulted supports to the city structures above, and that the reservoir extended much farther westward. (He is disposed to make the Pool of Bethesda the same with the Fountain of the Virgin, or, Solomon's Pool in the valley of Jehoshaphat.) It was evidently used as a *reservoir*, and was lined with stone and plaster. Dr. R. holds it to be the ancient fosse which protected the fortress Antonia, and the temple on the north. Large trees are growing in it which do not reach to the level of the street. ¶ *Sheep market*. The word *market* is not in the Greek, and is erroneously supplied by the translators. We hear nothing of such a locality, while we know there was a *sheep gate*, which is probably intended here. Neh. 3: 1, 32; 12: 39. It was the gate near the temple where sheep for the sacrifices were generally brought into the city, or held for sale, in the open space, as we saw them. We were struck at the sight of a flock of beautiful sheep, gathered just inside the gate, (St. Stephen's) which is now adjoining the temple area, and which has been commonly regarded as the "*Sheep Gate*." Anciently, however, the city wall ran along the valley of Jehoshaphat, and terminated probably at the eastern portico of the temple, (Rob. 1: 460,) so that the Gate was not the very same—and the present wall in that vicinity is not more ancient than the time of Agrippa. ¶ *Bethesda*. This name is significant, and means "*the house of mercy*," from two Hebrew words. It would seem to have been built by the contributions of the benevolent. ¶ *Porches*. These were covered recesses around the pool, for the shelter of the sick.

3. *Impotent folk*--*Sick persons*. ¶ *Withered*. The term refers to such diseases

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first<sup>a</sup> after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole<sup>b</sup> of whatsoever disease he had.

<sup>a</sup> Pr. 8. 17. Ec. 9. 10. Matt. 11. 17. <sup>b</sup> Eze. 47. 8, 9. Zec. 13. 1.

as paralysis, which takes away the use of the limbs. ¶ *Waiting, &c.* From this word to the end of vs. 4, there is some doubt about the text; but there is strong reason from the context to suppose it genuine, as it gives an important explanation of the other parts of the narrative. That a *miraculous* cure was *waited on*, is clearly implied, by the number of different diseases here mentioned, and by the fact that the cure was dependent on one's being the first to get in after the stirring of the water. It is not said that the angel was visible; and invisible agencies of angels are doubtless much more common than we generally suppose. Robinson suggests that as the water in these fountains is intermittent, this may be the "troubling of the water" referred to, flowing in and out. And if this were so, an angel may have been sent to dispense the healing qualities at such times. Barnes refers it to medicinal properties in the water, in a way to exclude any miraculous effect. We see no reason for evading the plain sense of the terms, which would surely convey the idea of a supernatural power exerted at intervals for the cure of *one*, and limited to the one who *first stepped in*—whereas if the healing lay in the virtue of the water, how could it have been so restricted?

4. *An angel.* It is not said that an angel *was seen* doing this. Nor need we suppose that this mention of an angel, is merely according to the Jewish notion, of ascribing all favors to the ministry of angels. Surely where they are all declared to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, (Heb. 1: 14,) it is not merely accord-

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity<sup>c</sup> thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and<sup>d</sup> knew that he had been now a long time in *that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

<sup>c</sup> Lu. 8. 43; 13. 16. <sup>d</sup> Ps. 142. 3.

ing to Jewish notions. Rather we may suppose that our notions are wrong in referring so few matters to the ministry of angels. They doubtless have to do with many common mercies which are thought to spring from natural causes and which may be brought about through natural operations, under their immediate agency. Many critics have regarded this explanatory passage as added by a transcriber and not belonging to the text. It is not found in some of the manuscripts. In others, it is written on the margin. But to leave it out, would destroy the connection of the passage—making the Evangelist stop with the term "*withered*" (vs. 3,) and proceed with vs. 5. And why should the sick be lying there, and why should the man have been so long waiting anxiously to be put in, unless some known effect followed on the troubling of the water, at these intervals, when he *wished* to be put in and could not be.—*Alford.* ¶ *Certain season.* At intervals, which were *irregular*, else the sick need not have waited.

5. *Had an infirmity.* Literally—was thirty and eight years *in the sickness*—had the same disease so long, but not at Bethesda all the while. This is mentioned to show the extreme case, as exhibiting Christ's supreme power and mercy.

6. Here, again, John records our Lord's superhuman knowledge of personal character and history—that He knew how long the man had been ill, &c. So He knew of Nathanael under the fig tree before he was called by Philip, and of the Samaritan woman and her five husbands, and of the nobleman's son. John's object is to re-

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have <sup>a</sup> no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am

<sup>a</sup> De. 32. 36. Ps. 72. 12; 142. 4. Ro. 5. 6. 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.

cord such instances which prove Christ's Divinity.

¶ *When Jesus saw, &c.* Our Lord's knowledge of his distressed case moved Him to compassion. So our sin and misery have moved Him to such pity as to bring Him into our world, a Healer, Substitute and Sufferer, Victim and Saviour, for lost man. Why He singled out this man among the many, we cannot say. It must be referred to His Sovereignty. Yet this was no damage or injustice to the rest. None had any claim on His favor. But it is implied that the special distresses of this man—his helplessness—his utter hopelessness, and his long continued suffering, brought our Lord to him. ¶ *Wilt thou.* Literally, art thou willing—dost thou wish? So our Lord introduces His great salvation. He offers it—asks if we will have it, and if we would desire to have deliverance wrought out for us, such as we cannot else obtain. If we care to be saved—if we feel our miseries, and would feel glad at the glad tidings, He is ready. He has come already. This is now the news to all. He would have us consent to be saved—to be *made whole*, by His Divine power and grace. This is the question with which he addresses every man, impotent and without help, as all are, and He alone can deliver and save.

7. The man thought of nothing beyond the *water*, and of the means of obtaining that kind of cure. His answer implies, that he had no one even to bring him daily to the pool, (for such an one might also have put him in at the proper time,) but that he crawled along to and fro, or perhaps remained there in his helplessness for long seasons. This poor impotent man, had neither ability nor help. Of course he means to be understood as having a strong desire to be healed—

coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, <sup>b</sup> take up thy bed, and walk.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 9. 6. Mar. 2. 11. Lu. 5. 24.

and as only wishing he could see any possibility of it in his forlorn case. ¶ *Before me.* If his cure must depend on his being beforehand of others, he must despair. His was just the worst possible case. All others had the advantage of him, and were always before him. Oh! if he had only some kind friend and helper near, to put him in, in season, so that he might be the first, and get the healing advantage. What a mercy!

8. *Rise.* This is the surprising way in which Christ brings deliverance. His commands are sweet. They are in mercy. The duties He enjoins are the very modes in which He would bring to us His Salvation. *Without going into the water*, the poor sick man is cured. It is not needed, if Christ pleases to dispense with it. If He had commanded it, it would have been indispensable—as when He said, “go to the pool of Siloam and wash.” ch. 9: 11. Means, ordinances and even sacraments, have no saving virtue in themselves, or apart from His saving power. Yet who shall dare omit them where Christ commands? Here He would have the man see that salvation is of Christ alone—that He is more than the water—more than the angel, more than both, though the man was impotent and Christ would have seemed to be commanding an impossibility, yet his inability would have been no excuse for disobedience. It is enough that Christ commanded him to do this thing. He always gives the strength to do what we attempt at His command. Christ told him to *rise*, though he could not help himself, and to *take up his bed*, and go away cured, walking as any well man could do, to show that he was perfectly cured just by His Divine word. ¶ *Bed.* This was usually a mat or rug; or the cloak, the outer garment, as it is still in Pales-

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on <sup>a</sup> the same day was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day; <sup>b</sup> it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

<sup>a</sup> c. 9. 14. <sup>b</sup> Je. 17. 21. &c. Matt. 12. 2. &c.

time. OBSERVE—1. Christ's commands are different from those of the old economy. They gave no adequate helps. Christ gives while he demands. Nay, He first gives—then asks. The motto of an ancient saint, was, "Only give what thou commandest, then command what thou wilt." 2. Christ's commands are in the way of healing and salvation. The sum of all His requirements is, that we be saved. How precious are His obligations, because they are gracious—binding us fast to Life and Heaven.

9. The man's healed condition was first to be shown in the discharge of duty—in obedience to the Divine command. He doubtless saw that Christ spake with authority—He was led to attempt to obey, though he might have pleaded his inability and said, "how can I rise and take up my bed, when I am a helpless paralytic, and when this power to get up and walk, is just what I need? If I could do this I could get to the water and be cured." Our Lord's authoritative word put away from the man all such objections, and accordingly he attempted obedience, and immediately he found himself healed. ¶ *The Sabbath.* Our Lord had directed this to give Him occasion also for laying down the rule in regard to the Sabbath.

10. *The Jews.* John uses this term. Not of *the people*, but of the *officers*—the *rulers*, either some of the Sanhedrim or others—who are in open controversy with our Lord. ¶ *Not lawful.* It was against the Mosaic law to carry burdens on the Sabbath. Neh. 13: 15-19; Jer. 17: 21; Exod. 31: 13-17; Numb. 15: 32-36. But the Pharisaical Jews had introduced a

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?

variety of false and worrisome distinctions, so that it had become "almost impossible for a plain unlearned man to know what was forbidden and what was permitted." See Luke 13: 15, 16.

11. The man's answer conveyed a weighty truth. It was really enough for him, or for any one, that a person who could work such an Omnipotent cure, had *authorized* him to carry his bed on the Sabbath. And this was indeed the very ground which Christ Himself took—that He, as Lord of the Universe, was Lord also of the Sabbath day. We may safely obey such a Divine and gracious Master. Further, also, such a gracious work proposed to be wrought on the man, laid him under obligations to respect and follow His directions. Besides in this case, the carrying of the bed had been commanded only as properly a part of the cure, or the natural result of the cure, so that the *cure* is to be charged with the violation of the Sabbath, if anything. And the question would simply be, whether it is not lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. See Luke 6: 9. For he who could do a work of necessity and mercy on that day, does wrong if he leave it undone, when by this neglect or omission, great evil may ensue. See Matt. 12: 6-11; Luke 13: 14; 14: 5.

12. Instead of inquiring more about the miracle, or asking, "who *healed thee*"—they were bent on finding the author of this pretended violation of their law, to punish Him if they could. Their question is—who told thee to do this which we pronounce unlawful? Their narrowness, severity, and bigotry, are here made to appear. It is

13 And he that was healed wist <sup>a</sup> not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed <sup>b</sup> himself away, <sup>1</sup> a multitude being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him,

<sup>a</sup> c. 4. 19. <sup>b</sup> Lu. 4. 39. 1 or, from the multitude that was.

no matter to them, though Divine power has been exerted in the cure of so hopeless a case, they are only the more encouraged against such a distinguished opposer of their opinions—and they will hunt Him down. They leave the man, in order to find the one who authorized him so to do. The man's reason too, was good in itself, and shifted the responsibility upon Him who wrought the cure. The man meant to offer this in vindication of himself and of his wondrous, unknown Healer, whom the rulers sought to accuse. They were ready enough to transfer the blame to Christ. They did not take any favorable view, nor look at the good that was done, but they saw only the ceremonial side of the matter, and cried out against a breach of observances such as their bigotry prescribed. They looked not at what they might admire, but only at what they might calumniate. They will hear nothing in defence. Bigotry is most unreasonable.

13. *Wist not.* The man had not thought of inquiring who this was, until that wondrous word came to him from the stranger, in which he found life; and then, the stranger had disappeared. ¶ *Conveyed Himself away.* Rather the term signifies, "to avoid by turning the head aside," and so it may mean—*had escaped his notice.* On account of the multitude, amidst so great a number, the man lost sight of Him. He was naturally so much excited and engrossed with the cure, that he lost sight of everything else, for the moment. It may express also, the easy, unobserved manner in which He, as it were, *glided* through the crowd. How amazing the love. When we were strangers, aliens, enemies, Christ died for us—delivered us, though we knew Him not.

Bel old, thou art made whole: sin <sup>o</sup> no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

c c. 8. 11.

14. *Afterwards.* The terms would intimate that it was some time afterward. ¶ *Findeth.* Our Lord will find out those whom He has healed—reminding them of His grace and giving them His gracious direction. This secures their perseverance and final salvation. ¶ *The temple.* The healed man was in the courts of the Lord, and, it is to be hoped, was engaged in devout worship. Such as have been healed from long sickness, or saved by grace, might be expected to find their way at once to God's house, for worship. ¶ *Sin no more.* This would, perhaps, imply, that his long disease had come from some habits of sin. Of this we cannot be sure. But if so, the man would be convinced more fully of Christ's Divinity from His knowledge of his history, so long back. So it was with the Samaritan woman, and with Nathanael. Indulgence in sin often brings on long continued disease—takes away the strength and produces premature decay and death. When one has been raised up from such a condition, the best advice that can be given, is not to indulge any more in these destructive vices. Besides this, He who works the deliverance, *hates the sin*, and out of *gratitude* to Him, it ought to be avoided ever after. Still further, the case of those who go on to sin, becomes worse and worse. ¶ *A worse thing.* This may mean, a worse condition, beyond any possible help, even from the Only Deliverer, and thus, at last, eternal death. *A worse thing*, observe, than thirty-eight years of pain and infirmity, is threatened.

15. This he may have done out of joy at finding out his Deliverer, not thinking of the mischief it might bring upon Christ. He could not have had any wish to bring trouble upon his

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

17 But Jesus answered them,

gracious benefactor. Some men, with very good motives, do very imprudent things, and injure Christ's cause, while they aim to benefit it. He perhaps did this to obey the rulers, and possibly to apologize further to them for himself. He speaks gratefully of his Healer, and records the salvation wrought out for him. "*It was Jesus who made him whole.*" None but Jesus can make a helpless sinner whole.

16. *Persecute Jesus.* These men cared neither for the poor paralytic who was healed, nor for the Messiah who thus had proved Himself divine. They caviled at the way in which He did this work of mercy, because it opposed their views—and so they sought even to take His life. They would have it that He was wicked, and that they were holy, and they would listen to nothing else. ¶ *To slay Him.* It was directed in the law of Moses that a Sabbath-breaker should be put to death. Exod. 31: 15; 35: 2. ¶ *Because.* As though they could find cause in what He had done, to slay Him as a violator of the sanctity of that day. This is the spirit which showed itself in this cruel nation, and which at last accomplished its malicious object, in putting to death the Prince of Life.

17. It appears that they found Christ and accused Him as a violator of the Sabbath. But what had He done? He had only spoken with His divine word to a poor cripple, and the man had been made whole. They blamed Him probably for the man's carrying a bed, at His direction, and upon His authority. ¶ *My Father worketh.* Our Lord here meant to say that Jehovah, whom they professedly worshipped, and whom He claimed as His Father, had always worked—on Sabbaths and on other days—never

My a Father worketh hitherto, and I work

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill b him, because he not only had broken the sab-

a c. 9, 4; 14. 10. b c. 7. 19

ceasing to rule and order all things in His works of creation and providence—"making His sun to rise and set"—"giving rain and fruitful seasons." In like manner also He Himself worked. As the Jews proposed to worship the Father, and could not find fault with Jehovah for working at all times as Lord of all—so He Himself did only what the Father did, and just because they did not and could not work apart—much less in any opposition to each other. He did not here plead that this work was a work of mercy, but He took higher ground—that He was Lord of the Sabbath, and therefore had a perfect right to do His divine work on that day. Of course He thus claimed the same right as His Father, and by calling God His Father, He made Himself equal with God. OBSERVE.—Our Lord here corrects their false notion, that the true Sabbath observance consists in ceasing from every outward work. He honored the Sabbath by doing His divine works more than He could have done by ceasing from them. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a *holy resting* all that day from *all such worldly* employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, &c. With God, ceaseless activity and holy energy are His highest repose. He rests in ceaseless labors of love. "God's works of Providence are His most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions." ¶ *Hitherto. Until now*—from the beginning. God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

18. *The more.* What He said in His vindication only enraged them the more. They could not be reasoned with. A new ground of offence they pretended to have now, in *His claiming to be the Son of God.* ¶ *His Father.*



bath, but said also that God was his Father, making <sup>a</sup> himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>b</sup> The Son can do

<sup>a</sup> Zec. 13. 7. c. 10. 30, 33. Ph. 2. 6. <sup>b</sup> ver. 30.

Literally—*His own Father*—His own proper Father. This was their understanding of His language, and this was His meaning. To make God “His own Father,” claiming “peculiar, personal Sonship” (and not as He is “*our Father*,”) was, in their view, blasphemy. This gives Him occasion to set forth His proper Person and offices, together with His special relations to the Father. And He will not keep back the truth merely because it will enrage them. This claim, in their view, went quite beyond the claim of Messiahship as commonly understood. They sought therefore to kill Him, for blasphemy and violation of the Sabbath, both of which were punishable with death, according to their law. Num. 15: 35; Levit. 24: 11–14.

19. He here declares that His relations to the Father make it impossible for Him to do anything apart from the Father, or alone and disconnected from the Father. As they are essentially one, He could not possibly do anything except what He is sure, *from His own personal knowledge*, that the Father doeth. ¶ *Can do nothing*. Literally—*is not able to do anything*. ¶ *What He seeth*. As He “is in the bosom of the Father,” He can see what the Father doeth, as none other can. “No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son *which is in the bosom of the Father*, He hath declared Him.” ch. 1: 18. ¶ *For*. The truth is now further stated in its broadest sense. The fact is, that *whatever things* the Father may at any time do, these things also the Son doeth likewise—in *like manner*—after the same fashion and plan. And as this perfect oneness belongs to all their doings, they can be no other than one. This indicates **a unity of being** as the ground of unity

nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For <sup>c</sup> the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 3. 17. c. 3. 35; 17. 26.

in action. It cannot be understood as only a moral unity—or unity of *will*, or of action in the operations of the Father and the Son. For, it is said expressly, the Son is *not able* to do anything of Himself, *except* what He seeth the Father do. ¶ *What things soever He doeth*. Literally—*may, at any time, do*. The Greek particle here, which expresses *contingency*, conveys this shade of the idea, and hence, the terms are most strong and comprehensive of every possible case. Of course, the personal offices of the Father are distinct from those of the Son, in the work of creation and redemption. But what is meant is, that whatever belongs to the Father as God to do, belongs to the Son, also as God—and that the Son has the same divine attributes of Omnipotence and Omniscience and Omnipresence as the Father, for all possible divine works. “Kiss the Son.”

20. *For*. This perfect unity is further explained and traced back to the peculiar, infinite love of the Father to Him. The Son was the object of the Father's love, eternally. It was always necessary to the Father to have an object of His love—and this was the Eternal Son. There is nothing, therefore, contradictory in this relation. And the Son cannot have any plan or operation but such as the Father approves. See ch. 10: 30; 17: 21. OBSERVE.—This unity of action is necessary. 1st. From the union of the two Persons in the Godhead. 2. From His peculiar, personal knowledge of the Father's acts; which He “*seeth*” as none other can. 3. From the constitutional love of the Father to the Son, making Him the reflection of Himself—the *character* (Gr.) or stamp, “express image of His Person”—“*shewing Him all things that Himself*

that himself doeth : and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*;

doeth"—"having no secrets with Him."

¶ *Sheweth Him all things.* This also represents the essential unity of their being and action. It also proves the Son to be Omniscient, as no mere creature, however exalted, would be capable of having all the doings of God *shewn* to him—no finite mind could possibly take in such a communication of all the divine works if it were offered. ¶ *Will shew Him.* This further future unfolding of the Father's plans to the Son, refers to the development of them in Providence—for the carrying on of the Mediatorial work. And this increasing display of the Father's purpose in Christ's redeeming work, would make them marvel, and would produce greater wonder than these miracles of healing, &c.

21. *For.* He now asserts His proper and essential work by His divine prerogative—the highest work that can be performed upon men—raising them from the dead and giving them life. He not only could heal the poor cripple of Bethesda, but could raise up and quicken, in the highest sense, whosoever He pleased. ¶ *Raiseth up:* If they stagger at the healing of the impotent man, they will be compelled to own His essential divinity in this greater work. In this passage He plainly refers to both the spiritual and bodily resurrection. Raising up the dead is more than curing the cripple. But quickening or imparting life to such, is more than raising them up. All this is most plainly a divine work. And that *quickening* of the soul to the highest style of life, from the death of trespasses and sins, is also the sovereign prerogative of the Son, as Mediator. ¶ *Quickeneth—Maketh alive.* This the great work which the Son performs in union with the Father.

even <sup>a</sup> so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed <sup>b</sup> all judgment unto the Son :

<sup>a</sup> Lu 8. 54. c. 11. 25; 17. 2. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 11. 27. Ac. 17. 31. 2 Cor. 5. 10.

¶ *Whom He will.* This power is exercised according to His good pleasure. He is, therefore, supreme, not subject to restraint from any one. His will is the Father's, and he also is God. ch 1: 1, 2. Besides, He is sovereign in this work of making such men spiritually alive, as He will. Yet it is according to "His own good pleasure." This is not arbitrary nor blind. He has been pleased to reveal His will, and to show the plan of grace according to which He chooses to make men alive. This work refers both to resurrection and regeneration, because the resurrection of the body, while it is to come upon all, comes to the believer alone as a privilege and blessing, promised to Him by divine covenant, and as a part of the Mediator's work. Phil. 3: 20, 21. OBSERVE.—1. To "quicken the dead" was acknowledged as a peculiar prerogative of God. Rom. 4. 17. Christ, then, claims to be equal with God by claiming to do this, and in the highest sense 2. To *quicken* or *give life* to men, is here understood as something more than to "raise the dead." So Christ says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." ch 11: 25. Giving Life in the *spiritual* sense, includes the physical resurrection, specially promised to all such. Though all men shall be raised from their graves, it will be a "*resurrection of life*" only to such as have been already quickened in their dead souls.

22. *For, &c.* Literally—"For neither does the Father judge any man." He goes on to show the further prerogative of the Son, in reference to men, even having the work of *judging* men committed to Himself, and that in *distinction* from the Father. This is indeed a solemn and awful relation in which He stands to men—and for the

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you,

He <sup>a</sup> that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed <sup>b</sup> from death unto life.

a c. 6. 40, 47. b 1 John 3. 14.

highest reasons. This work of judgment shows Him to be God, as it supposes Omniscience, since none could be *universal Judge* but one having power to search all hearts and understand all motives. ¶ *Hath committed.* This is part of the Father's will which is to be more fully "*shewn*," (vs. 20,) and which shall be greater than the healing of the paralytic. Acts 17: 31; Matt. 25.

23. The object of this exaltation of Christ as Judge of the world, is to require His being honored as God. This will be the demand, because He will thus be shewn to be God at the great judgment day. The term here used "*to judge*," means also in its wide sense to *rule*—includes the whole administration of the Divine moral government, (Ps. 110: 1;) the Governor and Universal Lord, being also Universal Judge. Phil. 2: 9; Eph. 1: 21; 1 Pet. 3: 22. ¶ *He that.* There can be no honor paid to the Father by those who refuse honor to the Son; for the Father can be "honored by us only *as the Father who sent His Son*." Besides He could not be the Son if there were not the Father, nor could the Father be such if there were not the Son. OBSERVE.—*Worship* is here claimed for Christ the same as for God the Father. There is no God but the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He who denies or dishonors either of these persons in the Godhead, denies or dishonors God. Hence he who refuses to worship Christ as God, does not worship the true God, and cannot be a Christian. The Jews worshiped the Father and claimed to be most devout and strict in their worship. But they were not worshiping the true God if they refused to worship Him as the Father of Jesus. OB-

SERVE.—Our Lord claims Divine worship, equal to that which is due to the Father, and on three grounds. 1. The community of nature. He calls God *His own proper Father*, as He is called in the same terms, God's *own proper Son*. Rom. 8: 32. "He that spared not *His own Son*." 2. From community of Divine attributes and agency as quickener and judge, and from the unity of being, making it impossible for the Son to do any thing independently of the Father. 3. From the oneness of their honor, as one cannot be honored without the other. "The Father can be honored in no way but through the Son." He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father in the character in which He has manifested Himself by the Son, namely, as the Father of Jesus Christ: does not acknowledge the grand attribute of the Father, His love in sending His own Son, does not pray to the Father as "the Father of Jesus Christ," does not and cannot trust with joyful confidence in the Father because he does not trust in the Son—cannot love the Father because he does not acknowledge the love of the Father, and, in fine, cannot obey the Father because he is without the aids obtained by faith in Christ *the Son*. Only they who honor Christ, pay any proper worship, or have any earnest and pure devotion. Men's devotedness to God is just in proportion to their love for the Redeemer. OBSERVE.—To deny one vital doctrine of scripture leads to the denial of all.

24. *Verily.* This introduces a most solemn practical truth. ¶ *Heareth.* Faith cometh by *hearing*, and it is he that *not only heareth* but also *believeth*. Our Lord here declares that faith in His word and in the Father *as having sent*

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead<sup>a</sup> shall hear the

<sup>a</sup> ver. 28. Eph. 2:1.

Him, (ch. 3: 17;) is the *sure evidence* of this eternal life which He claims to give. vs. 21. It is remarkable that here He repeats the declaration of John concerning Him (ch. 3: 26;) in almost the same words. Christ had said the same to Nicodemus and referred to the necessity of His being *lifted up*, in order that every believer in Him might have eternal life, (3: 15,) and He here declares that every such one *hath* eternal life. ¶ *And shall not come.* This refers to His power of passing judgment (vs. 22,) and implies that he who believes not *shall* come into condemnation in the last day. ¶ *But is passed.* Rather, *has passed.* The believer is justified already by faith and *has* peace with God, (Rom. 5: 1,) not by his works, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. His faith in Christ is a proof of his having been quickened—made alive by Christ—from the death in trespasses and sins, in which he was by nature. Ephes. 2: 1. “To him there is no difference, in point of fact, between this world and the world to come.” Augustine says, “In this life which is not yet life, we pass from death unto life,” by believing in Christ. John says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” 1 John 3: 14. The state of man by nature, is that of spiritual death. He is insensible to divine things. It is death in trespasses and sins from which believers are quickened by Christ. Ephes. 2: 1. The *new birth* is the name which Christ gives to this quickening. ch. 3. The teaching here is the same as that to Nicodemus. Men are dead in sin, until Christ, by his word and spirit, gives them the *new life*. They who are in a state of nature will not admit that they are thus dead. But when they are regenerated, they feel often that the change is like that of “passing from death unto life.” So our Lord spoke of the unbeliever as “condemned

voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in

already.” ch. 3: 18. John the Baptist, too, had spoken of the unbeliever, (ch. 3: 26,) that “he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” And this he said, too, in a similar connexion, as he had just declared, “For the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.”

25. This is a more direct reference to His work as going forward now. “His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner.” This He is now carrying on. The spiritual quickening is going on. ¶ *The hour is coming*, &c. This announces such things as would characterize His spiritual kingdom which then was *coming*, and had even commenced. It also looks beyond to the final resurrection especially of believers, as really involved in their spiritual resurrection—their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection. ¶ *Hear the voice.* This is in the sense of *hearing His word*, (vs. 24,) *believingly*. His word, as preached by Himself, by His apostles and ministers—shall be *heard* by a certain class, and they, and they alone, shall live. ¶ *They that hear.* This shows that a *spiritual* awakening is here chiefly meant. Hearing is evidence of life. Only the living *hear*.

26. Such as hear Christ's voice by faith shall live, because He lives. ch. 14: 19. His life is the pledge of theirs. Their life is *hid with Christ in God*. They shall live by His power and merit and finished work; and here He declares that He *has life in Himself*—and has it also, not in opposition to the Father whom they worshiped, but from the Father, as he is the Son of God. ¶ *In Himself.* The father has made Him the independent source of life, and dispenser of it to men as Mediator. “As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou

himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life <sup>a</sup> in himself;

27 And hath given him au-

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 45.

thast given Him." ch. 17: 2. He hath given Him *to have life in Himself*. It is not said that the Father hath *given life* to the Son, but hath appointed Him as the fountain of divine life to mankind. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." This appointment does not make Christ inferior to the Father—for it was an official appointment as *Mediator*, showing only the relations which He sustained to the Father *in this work*. And this appointment to such a work *implies a capacity in Him* to exercise the office, and this capacity must prove Him to be divine. None but God would be capable of exercising such an office.

27. Connected with this power of giving Life to men, is the authority to *execute judgment*, also, as the Son of MAN. ¶ *Authority*. That such authority was given to Him, is proved by His own resurrection, (as a pledge of that of His people,) and by His ascension, in which He was exalted to the right hand of God, to exercise universal dominion as Mediator—waiting till the *appointed day*, when He shall come to judge the world. This is part of His glorification. ¶ *Execute judgment*. Not merely to *judge*, but to *pass judgment* in a formal way, on the great final day. Acts 17: 31. ¶ *Because*. The reason of His having this office of Judge assigned to Him, is, that He wears our human nature. This is the kindest arrangement. 1. Because He who undertook to mediate for man with God, must have the most tender regard for man, and would naturally be chosen by us, to judge in our affairs. 2. He who, as God, took our nature and battled with the tempter, yet without sin, would sympathize with us, as to all our temptations. 3. As *God-man*, He would have a fellow-feeling with us, as well as with God; and as no one could so well be our Mediator, so no one could so well be our judge.

28. But this judgment occasion,

thority <sup>b</sup> to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the

<sup>b</sup> ver. 22.

when He shall *execute judgment*, is connected with the *resurrection of the body* from the grave. 1. Because the body and soul must be together, to make the proper person of any man. It is not *body* alone, nor *soul* alone, which makes the man, but both. 2. Because as body and soul *together*, have been engaged in the deeds of life, so together they must be judged. It is for the deeds done, (not by the body, but) in the body, (by the soul,) that men are to give account. There will be a judgment at death according to the necessities of the case—not of body and soul, but of the soul alone, to decide the state of the soul. But the final public judgment will be of the proper person, as including soul and body. ¶ *Marvel not*:—at this office-work of judgment being committed to the Son, or to Him as *man*, for you shall see greater things than these. ¶ *Is coming*. He does not add—"and now is," because He is speaking of the future judgment and resurrection day. ¶ *All*. This is not the resurrection of a *part* of the race—"whom He will." That was spoken of before, (vs. 21,) and was *spiritual*. But this is the resurrection of *ALL*--the dead and buried—of good and bad—believers and unbelievers—at the last day. ¶ *In the graves*. This speaks most plainly of the *dead bodies* being raised, not necessarily in the same material form—but in the same person, that which shall be *identified* as the same, but "changed," as God shall please, (1 Cor. 15: 35,) a *body*, but "a *spiritual body*." "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," &c. Dan. 12: 2. ¶ *Shall hear*. In verse 25, it was said that *some* only should hear His voice, that is, *practically and believingly*, for there He referred to the spiritual awakening. Here, *ALL* are spoken of as hearing—for *ALL* the dead shall be raised. His voice, too, shall have power to bring them forth, how-

hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they<sup>a</sup> that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that

a Da. 12. 2.

ever reluctantly the wicked may come. This shows Him to be God. None else could command the universe of mankind, and none else could raise the dead. The Jews owned that this was the peculiar work of God.

29. *Come forth*—from their burial as Lazarus. See ch. 11: 43, 44. Dan. 12: 2. ¶ *Done good*. The words here are different in the two clauses. So also, in the same phrase, ch. 3: 20, 21. They that have *done good*, and they that have *practiced evil*. The former refers rather to *works*—the latter to *habits*. A Christian has *works* to follow him—good fruit which *remains*. In this sense all the works of the wicked are vanity and falsehood, and they do not *remain*. Ch. 15: 16. Matt. 23: 34–36. OBSERVE—A true Christian will show his faith by his works. 2. It will be enough to condemn unbelievers that they have not believed in Christ, and that they have done nothing truly good, nor by patient continuance in well doing, sought for glory, honor and immortality. ¶ *Resurrection of life*. It is so called to distinguish it from the other kind of resurrection next spoken of. All will be raised from the dead, but not all to life. “Some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt.” Dan. 12: 2. It is here a rising to the possession and enjoyment of life, such as Christ gives to men, (vs. 21,) and such as they who believe on Him have, (vs. 24,) and such as true believers have *passed over to*, from their natural, original death in sin. “At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God, to all eternity.” This is called “*the resurrection of the just*,” (Luke

have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.<sup>b</sup>

30 I<sup>c</sup> can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the

b Matt. 25. 46. c ver. 19

14: 14,) and the first resurrection. Rev. 20: 5, 6. OBSERVE—The eternal state of men must correspond with their character and conduct here. Though believers will not be raised to life eternal on account of any good deeds which they have done, these are nevertheless mentioned as characterizing them. The saved, are “they that have done good.” The lost are “they that have done evil,” lived lives of unbelief and disobedience. ¶ *Of damnation*. Of condemnation under which the true believer is said *not to come, because he has passed from death unto life*. The unbeliever has never experienced this change, has never made this passage, and hence, is yet *in death*, and rises as he fell, to the sentence of condemnation. He that believeth not is condemned already, and must appear condemned at the judgment. Only they “*who die in the Lord*,” are declared by the Spirit *blessed*, (Rev. 14: 13,) and these rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. OBSERVE—As the righteous are raised to *eternal life*, so the wicked are raised to eternal condemnation. Matt. 25: 46. 2 Thess. 1: 8, 9. They who deny future rewards, and punishments in the life to come, deny this and such like scriptures—where Christ Himself has declared the awful truth.

30. Here begins the second part of the discourse. Our Lord has vindicated His right to do His Divine work on the Sabbath—and has brought the great subject of His supremacy home to His caviling hearers. Here He goes on to show what abundant testimony He has. 1. He shows that as He is essentially one with the Father, all His acts are to be regarded as necessarily sanctioned by the Father—

will <sup>a</sup> of the Father which hath sent me.

31 If I bear witness <sup>b</sup> of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There is another <sup>c</sup> that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

*a* Ps. 40. 7, 8. Matt. 26. 39. *c* 4. 34; 6. 38. *b* Pr. 27. 2. *c* 8. 14. Re. 3. 14. *c* c. 8. 18. Ac. 10. 43. 1 Jno. 5. 7-9.

and so with His judgment—it cannot be independent of the Father—but must be officially directed by Him. This ought to satisfy the Jews, who claimed to worship the Father. He now speaks plainly of Himself as “the Son of God,” whom He had spoken of in the previous passages. ¶ *As I hear.* Referring to His commission from the Father as Mediator. Every thing which He did in His work of judgment would be under this commission. He came to declare God’s will to man for his salvation. He will be governed by the highest, strictest rules of eternal Justice, in all His decisions. God may be said to be bound to act in conformity with truth and equity, for He is necessarily governed by these eternal principles. It proves no subjection nor inferiority, for it is the very necessity of His perfect nature. And on the same ground, Christ’s being bound to act according to the Father’s direction, does not prove any inferiority in Him. ¶ *Because I seek.* They constantly thought of Him as a private person, seeking His own selfish ends. He shows that He is engaged in promoting the Father’s will, and by inference, they who opposed Him must be opposing the Lord Jehovah.

31. He now brings forward the testimony which He had received. If, as a private person, He had nothing to refer to, or depend upon, but His own testimony of Himself, He could not claim to be believed. He goes on then to show that He has John’s witness and the Father’s witness, which is greater—in His miraculous works—as well as in the Father’s voice from Heaven. In ch. 8: 14, He says,

33 Ye sent unto John, and <sup>d</sup> he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but <sup>e</sup> these things I say that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing

*d* John 1. 7, 32. *e* c. 20. 31. Ro. 3. 3.

“though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true.” But this is, as He there shows, just because it is not *unsupported*, but necessarily the Father’s testimony witnessing in Him—“for I know whence I came and whither I go.” If His witness were independent of, and separate from the Father’s, it would be false and they would be right—but *as it cannot be*, He is right and they are false. Moses’s law required *two witnesses*. Deut. 17: 6.

32. *Another.* He evidently points here to the Father, as He will gradually show. This is the greater witness upon which He relied, and by which especially they ought to be convinced. From man He received not testimony, and John’s was valuable chiefly as coming from God, and confirming *the truth of God*.

33. *Ye sent, &c.* ch. 1: 19. ¶ *He bare witness.* ch. 1: 26-29, 36. They had enough confidence in John to regard him as a prophet and to send a formal deputation to him, to inquire who he was, and when he testified so plainly and fully to Christ, this should have been enough to satisfy them on their own ground.

34. But He would not rest His claim on any human testimony. It was not to boast of John’s good opinion, or sanction, that He mentioned this—but that they might make proper use of that testimony which they themselves had sought, and might be saved. He sought, most of all, their salvation—and He wished them to believe on Him, because it was the only way in which they could be saved. This was not a selfish question about authority, origin, rank, &c. as among men, (vs.

\* for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John; for the works<sup>b</sup> which the Father hath given me

a Matt. 21. 26. Mar. 6. 20. b c. 10. 25; 15. 24. Ac. 2. 22.

44,) but a question vital to their salvation. OBSERVE—When men are met on one ground, they are apt to fly to another, because they are unwilling to receive the truth.

35. Our Lord now testifies to John, that he was an eminent teacher among them, here called a *light*—as they were used to call their great teachers, “*lights*.” The word is not the same as is applied to Christ, when He is called the Light—but another word signifying a *portable light*, as a candle, lamp, lantern. Matt. 5: 15. It is used here with the article—“He was *the* burning,” &c. “*the* lamp which was to lead you”—or eminently, *the light*, nearest to the Sun itself, and greatest among the prophets, (Matt. 11: 11,) none born of woman, who was greater, in his time, or under the old dispensation. ¶ *Burning*. The term is passive—*lit up*, and not burning of itself. ¶ *And shining*, doing its part as conveying light—referring to John’s eminent teaching—but also transitory—shining yesterday and not to day; for this is what he *was*. He was now cast into prison. ¶ *For a season*. “*For an hour*,” literally—while it was the fashion—and while it was a novel and exciting matter. But soon they tired of him as he preached repentance, and they turned away from his instructions. The masses at first crowded after him, but with many good opinions of him, as a prophet, they heeded him not as the forerunner and herald of Christ.

36. Literally—“I have the witness greater than John”—for John was himself a witness. ¶ *The works*. All His works, both miraculous and saving, not His miracles alone, for they were only in order to His saving work—quickening dead souls—which was His great work. ch. 6: 29. But the mir-

to finish, ° the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father<sup>a</sup> himself, which hath sent me, hath borne

c c. 17. 4 d Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5.

acles such as Christ wrought to satisfy John’s messengers, (Luke 7: 21,) were addressed to the senses, and were such as they ought to receive. ¶ *To finish*. The Father gave Him a work as Mediator, to carry on to completion, and these same works, (which he was then doing,) in pursuance of this commission and office work, bore witness of Him. These supernatural works, showed that He was sent from God, for “no man could do those miracles which He did, except God were with Him.” This was the confession of one of them, Nicodemus. ch. 3: 2. And though it was not the kind of conviction which He preferred, or relied on, it was such as they could not in any fairness avoid. So He appealed to these when everything else failed. “If ye believe not me, believe the works,” ch. 10: 28. OBSERVE—Christ’s finished work is our only hope for salvation. He has made *atonement*—He has wrought out and brought in everlasting righteousness, and “our hope is now *set before us* in the gospel.” See Heb. 6: 18, 19. He said in death, “It is finished,” and expired. To receive Him as our “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption,” is our only way to be saved.

37. Beyond the indirect testimony of these miraculous works, the Father Himself hath given a *direct* testimony of me in His word. vs. 39. Not indeed by sensible manifestations, speaking as man to man, and showing Himself in visible form, as to Moses at Sinai—but in their own scriptures. Indeed, “no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” ch. 1: 18. The Father’s direct, explicit witness of Him at His baptism and at His transfiguration, were in an audible voice, but these



witness of me. Ye <sup>a</sup> have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word <sup>b</sup> abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 Search <sup>c</sup> the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal

<sup>a</sup> De. 4: 12. <sup>b</sup> 1 Ti. 6: 16. <sup>c</sup> 1 John 2: 14. <sup>d</sup> Is. 8: 20; 34: 16. <sup>e</sup> Lu. 16: 29.

were rare manifestations—not the usual ones, and they were of course confined to a few. Instead of these, and as a common property which they all possessed, He had witnessed of Christ in His written word.

38. Nor, had they the *inward* witness from a true faith in His word, as “he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” 1 John 5: 10. If they had believed on Him they might have been satisfied, without a sensible manifestation of God the Father.

39. But they have also a kind of witness which even they could be expected to receive—their own scriptures were the Father’s testimony of Him; for “the testimony of Jesus is the (very) spirit of Prophecy.” Rev. 19: 10.

¶ *Search.* This is a solemn challenge to them—to search earnestly their own scriptures of the Old Testament, in which they boasted as containing the covenant with their nation, and giving them the promise of eternal Life.

¶ *They are they.* These scriptures will be found upon a faithful candid search, to testify of Me, as the author and source, and giver of Life Eternal. After His Resurrection He more expressly showed this to be true, for “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24: 27. So Philip declared to Nathanael. ch. 1: 45. OBSERVE—Our Lord here appeals to a fourfold testimony, and there is a regular gradation in the witnesses that He claims. 1. The witness of John. 2. His miracles and gracious works which confirmed John’s words. 3. His own doctrines which gave still stronger

life: and they are <sup>d</sup> they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come <sup>e</sup> to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from <sup>f</sup> men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

<sup>d</sup> Lu. 24: 27. <sup>e</sup> 1 Pe. 1: 10, 11. <sup>f</sup> c. 3: 19. <sup>g</sup> ver. 34. <sup>h</sup> Th. 2: 6.

proof of His having come forth from the Father as the Messiah. 4. The weightiest testimony of all, was the Father’s direct witness as given, (at His Baptism and transfiguration not only,) but in the Scriptures, which had been specially committed to the Jews.

40. *And (yet) ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* I am the only true way of Life—“the way, the truth and the Life”—*all in all* for salvation—and so your own scriptures abundantly, plainly testify—and yet, ye will not come to me—Literally, *Ye are not willing—do not wish.* The difficulty is in your *repugnance* to Me. It is not for want of testimony. But it is for want of disposition to embrace me and my finished work. Though you think you possess in the scriptures, eternal life, yet you are not willing to come to me, of whom they testify.

41. They evidently wished a Messiah who should be great among men, (vs. 41.) a leader, a Ruler, a conqueror for their national, political advantage. But His kingdom came not “with observation,” with outward pomp and show. Hence, *their* position and *His* were entirely opposite. His glory was from an entirely different source.

42. The great difficulty with them was their lack of love to God—and their taste for human pomp and applause. This taste He could not gratify, but could only break it down, “casting down imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,” (2 Cor. 10: 5,) and hence they rejected Him. ¶ *I know you. I have known you—of old.* ¶ *The love of God*—He knew the Father, (vs. 32,) and so He knew them. And

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which <sup>a</sup> receive honour one of another, and

a c. 12. 43.

He knew their radical alienation from the Father, though they pretended to love Him. If they had any love to Him, it would teach them to love *the son of His Love*, (vs. 20,) and to seek the honor that cometh from God only.

¶ *In you. In yourselves*—where the fault lies. This was the inward, personal difficulty—a matter of the heart. Hence, it turned out, that these who claimed to have every thing religious and godly in themselves, and even persecuted Christ out of a boasted zeal for God, had no such real feeling or quality. OBSERVE—How this one word of Christ pronounces judgment beyond appeal, reaching the depths of the soul. “Who may abide the day of His coming.” “*I know you,*” notwithstanding your pretences and boasts. How all vain hopes and self-flatteries will sink away before this word of the Judge! He knows us better even than we know ourselves. We gain nothing by avoiding self-inspection. He will bring our true character to light.

43. He came with the highest authority in His Father's name—and they rejected Him. ¶ *If another.* See vs. 32. He brought another's witness, even the Father's. But if another than He should come *without witness*, they would receive him, and thus would show how false-hearted they were, and that the difficulty was *not in the witness*, but in *themselves*—in their own hearts, and that in reality, while they would be thought to be jealous of God's honor, they had nothing of His love in them. So, as He had before shown, they did not worship the Father in truth, because they did not recognize Him, as He who sent the Son. So they stood every way condemned. ¶ *Will receive.* Some think the refer-

seek <sup>b</sup> not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is <sup>c</sup> *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

b Ro. 2. 10. c Ro. 2. 12.

ence here is to the Anti-Christ of the latter days, (2 Thess. 2: 8–13,) who will be received by such without any Divine witness. The direct reference is to the false Messiahs, (more than one, even including the great Anti-Christ in his last form,) whom they would be so ready to receive. John in his epistles wrote of “*many Anti-Christ*,” as being then already abroad in that time. 1 John 2: 18. Though our Lord's true disciples were few, a Jew from Egypt, as Josephus tells us, gathered to his standard on Olivet, 30,000 deluded followers; and this apparently “in his own name,” without any such testimonies, human or divine, as Christ had. John defines Anti-Christ, as “he who denieth the Father and the Son,” which the Jews really did—as Christ showed, (ch. 5: 23,)—and for such they would have affinity. OBSERVE—Those who are most slow to believe the truth of God, are often most ready to believe impostures of every kind. God often sends them strong delusion, *to believe a lie*. See 2 Thess. 2: 11.

44. *How can ye*—Literally, “*How are ye able to believe?*” The great difficulty in the way of their believing God, is here traced to their undue confidence in man and regard for human opinion and applause. So the prophet charges upon the unbelieving of old. “And their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men.” Isa. 29: 13. ¶ *From God only.* Literally, *from the only God*, implying that they had their idols—false gods—that they worshiped men and men's opinions, and sought honor from creatures rather than from the Creator. This was directly contrary to the teachings of Moses, and to the Law of God, which they boasted: as He proceeds to show.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote <sup>a</sup> of me.

<sup>a</sup> Ge. 3. 15; 22. 18. De. 18. 15, 18. Ac. 26. 22.

45. It would not be necessary for Him to accuse them to the Father—for Moses whom they professed to follow, would do it. They had rejected His claims as God, yet they had made to themselves false gods—idol divinities, which they worshiped. They had professed to receive and rest in Moses as their Teacher, yet Moses taught of Him. It was not His business to accuse them, (as if for His own pleasure,) for they would stand every way condemned by their own Scriptures. Christ, though He is the Judge, declares that He will not condemn men, (arbitrarily,) but the words that He has spoken, the same shall judge them in the last day. ch. 12. 49. ¶ *Trust*: (See vs. 39; Rom. 2: 17;) “making their boast in the law,” as bringing them salvation and “eternal life.” Compare Deut. 31: 21, 26 with ch. 7: 19.

46. *Moses*. His writings, vs. 47. This is our Lord’s testimony that Moses is the author of the books which bear his name—the five books of Moses, from Genesis to Deuteronomy inclusive—and that those books teach of Christ as the angel of the covenant, in whom God appeared unto their fathers—and as “the prophet, like unto Moses.” See Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews. ¶ *He wrote of me*. Gen. 3: 15; 12: 3; 18: 18; 26: 4; 49: 10; Numb. 21: 9; Deut. 18: 15–18. This is an important testimony as to the sense and object of the writings of Moses. “*Nowhere*,” says Bengel, “*did he not write of Christ*.” The Pentateuch, in its history, genealogies and institutions is full of Christ, even though we may not have noticed this. “*Search the Scriptures to find Christ in them all*.”

47. *His writings*. The term here is not the same as is used to signify “*Scriptures*”—but rather refers to

47 But if <sup>b</sup> ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

<sup>b</sup> Lu. 16. 31.

outward form—the *letters, writings*—referring to the sacred documents as held by them, and to their own Moses as the human agent in producing them. Writings are naturally more revered than *words*. Especially was it so among them, as they boasted of these documents which had been handed down to them through long ages, and which they kept with such jealous care, as “the oracles of God.” If they rejected the teachings of their own boasted and cherished Scriptures to which He appealed, and by which He was ready to be tested, much more would they reject His words, when they came to them with no such ancient reverence and acknowledged authority. Again, says Calvin, He shows their unbelief to be more aggravated, because the truth of God recorded in an authentic form has no authority with them. Besides, Moses leads to Christ. If they rejected this *witness* of Him, how would they receive Him in His own *person*. If they rejected the schoolmaster’s instructions, how would they receive the Person of whom he taught? OBSERVE.—Many profess to receive the Scripture and yet receive not its teachings—do not ever *search* the Scriptures to find what is their real testimony. vs. 39. 2. The Old Testament Scriptures agree with the New Testament, and are equally of God, and testify of Christ. Those who do not value them as such, cannot receive the New Testament in its proper light. 3. They who reject one part of the Bible do virtually reject all of it—for it is the work of one and the same Divine Spirit, revealing one and the same system of religion. John has thus advanced a step farther in His narrative to testify of Christ’s divinity. He has here shown what Lord professed to be, and how He claimed so positively to be God.

## CHAPTER VI.

¶ AFTER<sup>a</sup> these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of Tiberias*.

2 And a great multitude followed

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 14. 15, &c. Mar. 6. 34, &c. Lu. 9. 12, &c.

## CHAPTER VI.

§ 64. THE TWELVE RETURN—JESUS RETIRES WITH THEM ACROSS THE LAKE—FIVE THOUSAND ARE FED. *Caper-naum.—N. E. Coast Lake.*

Matt. 14. 13-21. | Mark. 6. 30-44. | Luke. 9. 10-17. | John. 6. 1-14.

Here John further testifies of Christ's divinity by narrating a notable miracle, and introducing thus a very remarkable discourse of our Lord, to the same end. It was delivered just before His third Passover, and it was therefore only about a year before His death. John has selected this of all our Saviour's discourses during a year and a half, as being very specially fitted for his object. This is one of the few passages in which John falls in with the other Evangelists. There is an interval of about a year between this and the discourse in the preceding chapter, during which time our Lord chose His twelve apostles—delivered the sermon on the Mount, &c. § 36—§ 64. Meanwhile the twelve had finished their mission, and were now returned, and Jesus retires with them across the Lake. Herod was pronouncing Christ to be John the Baptist (§ 63,) risen from the dead!

1. *After these things.* The phrase here implies a longer interval than usual, in the narrative. It is *general*—as we say, "*after a while.*" ¶ *Over the sea.* The last chapter recorded a discourse at Jerusalem. Here our Lord is at the sea or lake, which was well understood to be that of Galilee. His chief labors had been in Galilee, through which He had made His second and third circuits since John's last record of Him. ¶ *Which is.* This may be explanatory, as it was to the Gentiles the more common and well known name of the sea, from the

him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

ancient city which stood on its S. W. shore, and took its name from Tiberias Cæsar. From Luke's narrative (9, 10,) we learn that He went to Bethsaida, (Julias,) on the N. E. corner of the sea.

2. *Because they saw.* This can be understood only by observing from the Harmony (§ 62, &c.) that He had been working many miracles throughout Galilee. The people, as the other Evangelists tell us, had gone on foot round the Lake, and had arrived first, so as to receive Him when He stepped on shore. See Matt. 14: 13; Mark 6: 33. The "*great multitude*" is further explained by vs. 4, that "*the Passover was nigh,*" and many were thronging to Jerusalem. ¶ *Which He did.* Which He wrought upon the sick.

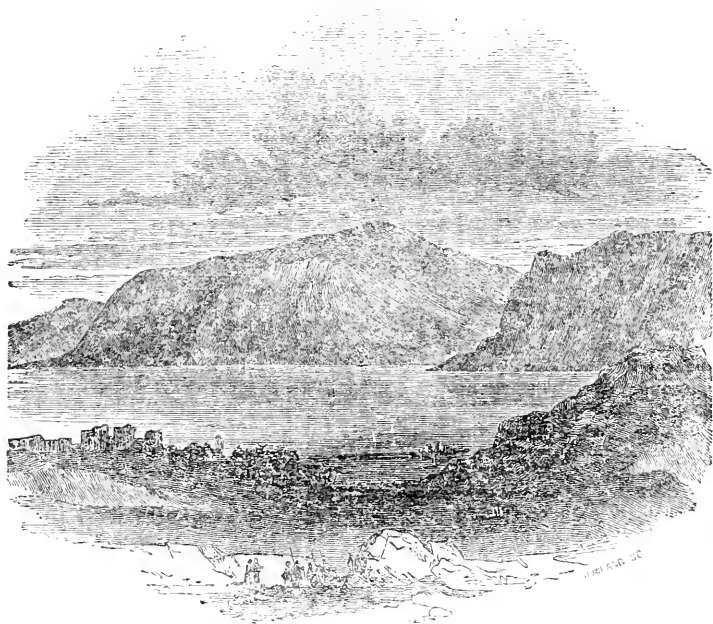
3. *A mountain.* Rather—the *mountain*. The sea is skirted with a chain of hills on either side; and thus it lies in a basin, which accounts for the sudden gusts which so often disturb its waters. It was on the E. shore, as least frequented, that our Lord went for retirement from the crowd. We came upon the Lake from Nazareth and Taber over the beautiful hill that slopes gently down upon Tiberias. Not a ripple was upon the water—nor was a boat to be seen, nor any trace of the fishing which used to find profitable employment there. The old circle of fishermen who had become known to all the world, were known rather as "*fishers of men.*" The Lake lay there as ever, and its features, as we looked upon them, would be recognized doubtless by our Evangelist as the face of a familiar friend. We had seen no Lake so much resembling it, as the Lake of Geneva, on whose hilly banks we had looked across the placid waters upon

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

old Mont Blanc, glowing in a glorious sunset. But this was a more glorious scene where we seemed to see "the Ancient of Days" walking on the

5 When Jesus then lift up *his* eyes, and saw a great company

troubled waters, at the fourth (last) watch of the night, and the sea and hills all lighted up with the effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness.



4. *The Passover.* This was the third Passover of our Lord's ministry, and a year before His death. John writing for those not familiar with Jewish customs, and after the Jewish polity had been destroyed, explains—that it was "a feast of the Jews." This accounts for a great multitude being gathered on their way to Jerusalem.

5. Our Lord, of course, knew beforehand that they would follow after Him. But He acted as a man—for He was also man as well as God: and the inspired writer records His action as it appeared to human view. ¶ *When*

*Jesus.* It might seem from this that He asked this question *as soon as* He saw the company. But this is not said. From the other Evangelists we learn that it was after He had discoursed to them and healed their sick. Luke 9: 11. John does not attempt to relate all that occurred, but sets out to tell of this miracle, and so he introduced it at once, and gives only what belongs to it. ¶ *Unto Philip.* Some have variously conjectured the reason for His addressing Philip rather than any other—as that he was weaker in the faith, or slower to believe than the

come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.)

7 Philip answered him, Two "

α Nu. 11. 21, 22. 2 Ki. 4. 43.

rest. See vol. Mark and Luke, *notes*. Blunt supposes the reason to be given, that "Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." But that was doubtless the other Bethsaida, a city of the same name, near Chorazin, on the W. coast of the Lake. Hence, Birks has conjectured that the city of Bethsaida on the W. coast had a district belonging to it on the Eastern shore, for the convenience of its fishing business. There needs no reason for Philip being addressed. Some one would be spoken to, in asking such a question—and the object was not to meet the case of Philip so much as to meet the case of all—by preparing the way for the miracle as He was wont to do, by getting first a confession that no human power could accomplish it. If this Bethsaida be that of the W. coast, as has been suggested, (see Notes on Luke 9: 10,) we can see a striking reason for Philip and Andrew being prominent in this matter, as they belonged to the city, and would know about the supply of provisions. We observed the mountainous border of the Lake, as we approached from Nazareth over the beautiful and high hill overlooking Tiberias, and gently sloping down to the shore, which is said by tradition to be the site of the miracle of feeding the *four thousand* with seven loaves. It is, however, more probable that this Bethsaida was across the Lake, as it is so constantly spoken of as "on the other side," (περὰν) that is—from where they lived. We observed that the hills on the *other side*, were higher and *more bare and wild* in their appearance—which also agrees with this narrative. ¶ *Whence*. The object was to call attention to the great quantity that would be needed to feed

hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath

so many, and to their utter lack, so that when He should furnish a supply, they must confess that it was done by miraculous power.—Stier notices six wonderful words of Christ in this miracle, of which this is the first.

6. This is recorded to show that our Lord foreknew what would be said and done, and that His object was only to draw out a confession beforehand of their inability to feed so many.

7. *Two hundred pennyworth*. About \$25. This would seem to have been the sum in hand, provided by the disciples for their support, and for the expenses of their journey to Jerusalem. Mark has it, that they asked if they should expend this sum—(their whole amount of money (?)) and Philip owns here that it would not furnish enough. So our Lord will first have men confess that their utmost means will be quite inadequate to supply their want, and *then* He will work His salvation. Some understand that the sum named was only a *round sum*, proverbial among the Jews, and meaning *more than they had*. See the narrative strikingly detailed in Mark 6: 35–37. "We are to learn not to be too confident in our reckonings, so long as they are made for more or less, *without the host*. How many great counting houses and mercantile houses have forgotten in their books, the column for the blessing or the curse of God!" ¶ *That every one*. This amount of money would not buy enough for each of the multitude to have a little.

8. *Andrew*. He was of the same city with Philip, and they were doubtless very intimate. ch. 1: 44.

9. *A lad here*. This is a more particular narrative than that of the other Evangelists. It seems that this was

five barley-loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set

down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, <sup>a</sup> he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing <sup>b</sup> be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

a Ne. 9. 25. b Ne. 8. 10.

in possession of a boy in the company. The others speak of it as belonging to the twelve, (who at once bought it,) or, perhaps to the company of whom the lad was one, and among whom they had just made inquiry. Mark 6: 38. OBSERVE—1. A lad—a *small boy*—has in hand that which Christ uses to feed five thousand people! A child may carry the tract or message which shall save one soul, and be thus the means of saving thousands. 2. Andrew, who called Simon Peter, is the one who notices this lad, and finds out what he has that is made to be so much, though it was in itself so little. They who have a true zeal for souls, will notice *the children*—and will find out what they have, and put them in the way of being useful—and this will lead, through Christ, to the feeding of thousands. 3. Let the children know that they can do much for Christ and for the world, if they will. “*A little maid*” prevailed with the Syrian captain, Naaman, to send for the prophet of the Lord, and he was healed of his leprosy. 2 Kings 5: 3, 4.

“What time the Saviour spread His feast,  
For thousands on the mountain side;  
One of the last and least,  
The abundant store supplied.”

4. Let the boys and girls from the streets and crowds be gathered into the Sabbath school.

10. *Much grass*. John gives the account as an eye witness. This agrees with the time of the Passover, in spring, when the grass is high and

flowers abound in the fields. ¶ *Sat down*—in ranks, or companies. See notes on Mark and Luke. It was at this season of the year when we were in the Holy Land: and we can understand how there could be “*much grass*” in the place, in March, before the Passover. The vernal rains had ceased: and we were assured beforehand, as we found it, that after the middle of March, no rain, or almost none, would fall for many weeks. The fields were in their freshest dress—everything luxuriant in the genial sun after the copious showers—the *anemone* opening its broad, crimson leaves, and spreading over acres a royal robe, while in the rank grass our tents were pitched at evening without risk from any dampness, or we cast ourselves down at noon to sleep on the velvet carpet, under the shade of any tree, or shrubbery. “Blessed are they who are fed by the Master in His own Holy Land—in the Heavenly Canaan—where the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead unto living fountains of waters.” Rev. 7: 17.

12. *Gather up*, &c. This command is not recorded by the other Evangelists. He would have it seen how there was more left from the abundance which He had wrought, than they had altogether without His help. But besides this, He would have them lose nothing, but gather the fragments for their own use—each in his traveling basket. In this the Jews commonly

14 Then these men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that <sup>a</sup> Prophet that should come into the world.

¶ 15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

<sup>a</sup> Ge. 49. 10. De. 18. 15-18.

16 And <sup>b</sup> when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose, <sup>c</sup> by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs,

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 14. 23. Mar. G. 47, &c. <sup>c</sup> Ps. 107. 25.

carried food, lest they should be polluted by the food of the people through whose territory they passed. OBSERVE.—If our Lord, who could, by a word, create such an abundance, would have the fragments gathered up, how must He frown upon a reckless waste of His bounties. Whether men waste His gifts upon appetite, show, pleasure, or squander them because He has given them so large a supply, they offend God, by not taking proper care of what He gives them, and making proper use of it.

14. John alone records this *effect* of the miracle. It falls in with his design, to show the Divinity of our Lord. Here, therefore, he gives the testimony of those who saw it wrought. ¶ *That Prophet*. Namely, “the prophet like unto Moses,” who was promised. The Messiah. In ch. 1: 21, they asked John if he was *that prophet*, viz: which should come—who was predicted as to come into the world. Now they have found from Christ’s miraculous work who that Prophet is, as John had declared.

¶ 65. JESUS WALKS UPON THE WATER.  
*Lake of Galilee—Genesaret.*

|            |           |           |           |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Matt.      | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.     |
| 14. 22-26. | 6. 45-56. | 8. 15-17. | 6. 15-21. |

15. *Make Him a King*. The people were ready from what they had seen, to exalt Him over them as king—or to proclaim Him the King of the Jews in Jerusalem, whither they were going. Yet their views were secular and worldly—they did not receive Him as the true Messiah, with any just views

of His reign. Therefore He would withdraw from them. The other Evangelists record the fact of His withdrawing, while John also gives the reason, and thus throws light upon the narrative.

16-21. See Notes on Matthew and Mark, for an explanation of this miracle of walking on the Sea. It is given in substance by John, but most briefly: for his object is merely to record the fact as another proof of our Lord’s Divinity, and then pass on to the Discourse.

20. *It is I*. Literally, *I am*. This recalls the Divine name. Exod. 3: 14. ¶ *Be not afraid*. This word of encouragement had been used under the Old Testament—but now first in the mouth of the Son of Man, has it the full power really to take away all fear. Thus did He come into the world with His miraculous manifestation. “I am the Helper.” Happy he, indeed, who in the true faith of a disciple, although it may at first be weak, gets acquainted with the gracious Master, in order to be helped. So then every new “*It is I*,” always more effectually dissipates anxious fears, until the gracious words are heard for the last time, in the last fear of death, as in Rev. 1: 17, 18. John does not record the incident of Peter’s impetuous experiment and the result. Only Matthew mentions it. Stier shows Peter’s *doubt* at the start, “If it be thou”—his asking to go out of the ship to Christ, instead of to have Christ come into the ship—his asking this for himself “*Bid me come*,” where



they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

¶ 22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into

α Ps. 35. 3. Is. 43. 1, 2. Re. 1. 17, 18.

the *me* is the flaw in the great faith, on account of which it shall soon become so little—running before it is called, begging for a call for single *me*, where *me* is not first called to the venture by Christ. Because he will outrun the others in showing his faith, he will be allowed to show himself the “stone,” upon the water, that he is.

21. *They received Him willingly.* (Literally, “they were willing to receive Him into the ship,” as they had not been at first, on account of their fear,) and immediately (hinting of His power which had perfect control of the elements,) by the calming of the sea, &c. as His providential favoring, the boat was at the land. 1. How many are afraid of Christ—fear to come to Him, or to have Him come to them—look upon Him as an inquisitor, rather than a Saviour, and have dread of His requirements rather than any trust in His plan of grace. They go about in doubt and terror from legal fears, and do not receive Christ into their vessel, and hence do not get a smooth arrival at their haven. 2. Some hold that no one can walk upon the waves of the world, and of history, and that the Christ who really does so, must be only a phantom of men’s imagination. Yet these very skeptics are ready

the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone:

. 23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the <sup>b</sup> place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks;)

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when earnest thou hither?

β ver. 11.

enough to take a phantom of their own imagination to be God!

‡ 66. OUR LORD’S DISCOURSE IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM. MANY DISCIPLES TURN BACK. PETER’S PROFESSION OF FAITH.—*Capernaum.*

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
|       |       |       | 6. 22-71. |
|       |       |       | 7. 1.     |

22. The Evangelist here relates what the multitude had noticed as to the facts of Christ’s departure—namely, that there was but one boat, and that this they saw go away without Christ, and hence, that as they found Him the next day at Capernaum, He must have gone across in some unexplained manner. This statement is given to show how their observation of the facts would correspond with the miracle.

23. *Other.* This is thrown in here, as a parenthesis, to account for their getting across—namely, that other vessels came from Tiberias to the vicinity of the place where the miracle had been wrought.

25. *When.* They are puzzled about the time and way in which He had gotten there, and are not inquiring about the more important matters of salvation. So men are inclined to query about the Trinity and about the

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour <sup>1</sup> not for the meat

<sup>1</sup> or, work not.

Incarnation, rather than about *how* they can be saved by Christ. Such vain questionings our Lord does not encourage.

26. Instead of satisfying their inquiry, our Lord exposes their hollow hypocrisy, and shows that their interest in Him is of the lowest kind, and that His miracles have wrought no proper conviction in them. ¶ *Miracles*. Rather—*signs*—miraculous signs or tokens of the Divine presence, as in vs. 2 and 14. It appears plainly from vs. 30, that the miracle which He had just wrought, had been of no effect in convincing them of His Divinity. Therefore He charges them with their carnal, grovelling aim, which looked no higher than the satisfaction of bodily appetites.—Many profess Christ from low motives of temporal advantage. Christ invites the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him for rest, and the hungry, for food. But they must come to Him as the only Lord and Saviour, and the only true and lasting portion of the soul.

27. *Labour not*, &c. *Work not*—*εργαζεσθε* He turns their attention now from carnal provisions to spiritual, and takes occasion from the miracle to illustrate His greater work for giving food to the soul. He does not forbid them to labor for temporal provision, but rather chiefly to labor for the soul's food. They were chiefly concerning themselves about the perishing food, such as He furnished them, which could answer only for a day's supply, or for a meal. ¶ *Which perisheth*—as to its nourishment: and more is immediately required. ¶ *Meat*. The term means not *meat*, but *food*—and this is used in all languages to signify figuratively sustenance for the

which perisheth, but for that <sup>a</sup> meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him <sup>b</sup> hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him,

<sup>a</sup> Jer. 15. 16. c. 4. 14. ver. 54. 58. <sup>b</sup> Ps. 2. 7; 40. 7. Is. 42. 1. c. 8. 18. Ac. 2. 22. 2 Pe. 1. 17.

soul. ¶ *But for that*. Labor, be concerned in seeking for *that food*, which is not perishing, but *enduring*, in its qualities, and in its power to feed the soul: lasting eternally, as long as the soul lasts. ¶ *Shall give*. He here first hints of what He means to open to them further by degrees. He here first states only that He has this food to give, and proposes to give it. Our Lord is thus teaching them as He did the woman of Samaria, by means of the commonest necessities of life, how needful and suitable is His salvation. ¶ *For*. He is fully authorized to give this food—for this is His office and commission from the Father. ¶ *Sealed*. The Father has set the stamp and seal of Divine authority upon His person and work, testifying at His Baptism, "This is my beloved Son," &c. and stamping His work by miracles. OBSERVE—Men are commanded to labor for salvation, and yet it is the free gift of God, in Jesus Christ. The gate is wide open, but they are to strive to enter in. They are to concern themselves about salvation, to inquire—to find the way—to lay hold on the hope—to flee from the wrath to come, and to labor for this rather than for temporal possessions; and yet all their working is not to merit it, but only to receive and apply it for their salvation. OBSERVE—Our Lord in this miracle showed His power and plan to restore the ruins of the fall. *Want* is a fruit of sin. He can supply all want and create a superabundance. And by the lower gift He illustrates the higher provision, which He has to bestow for the soul.

28. As He had just exhorted them to concern themselves chiefly for another kind of food, they take Him

What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This <sup>a</sup> is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign <sup>b</sup> shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work?

<sup>a</sup> 1 Jno. 3. 23. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 12. 38. 1 Cor. 1. 22.

up at the word, and ask what they are to do, to fall in with this that He proposes—(the same word is used here as is rendered “*labor*,” in vs. 27,)—they seem to understand Him so far as to inquire what kind of work He exhorts them to do: and how they shall work such works of the law as God requires.

29. *The work.* He speaks not of *works*. They had thought of a round of *legal works*, which should be acceptable to God. There is but one work, properly speaking—and this is no legal work. This is *the thing* required—namely, to believe—to *accept the finished work of Christ*, as accepted by the Father in the room and stead of sinners.

30. When they see that it is a work of the heart—a spiritual obedience and submission that He requires, they at once alter their tone, and talk doubtfully of His authority. They now again demand some sign. They seem to make nothing of His miracle. This shows that they cared for nothing in the miracle but the food. And now they demand a *sign* as though none had been wrought. OBSERVE.—1. How many go about seeking some method of salvation, as though there were no Gospel, no Christ, no hope set before them. 2. How unreasonable is the spirit of unbelief, that makes nothing of all the evidences and proofs which Christ has furnished, but demands something *more convincing*, and such as it shall dictate. Like the cavilers at the crucifixion, who demand that He should show His divinity by

31 Our fathers <sup>c</sup> did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, <sup>d</sup> He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my <sup>e</sup> Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

<sup>c</sup> Ex. 16. 15. Nu. 11. 7. 1 Cor. 10. 3. <sup>d</sup> Ne. 9. 15. Ps. 78. 24, 25. <sup>e</sup> Ga. 4. 4.

coming down from the cross—or like Satan who demands that He should turn stones into bread, or cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Calvin says, “How many eagerly embrace the Gospel, when they think it will flatter their vices; but when they are called to deny themselves and to bear the cross, then they begin to renounce Christ, and to ask whence the Gospel came.”

31. They seem to demand something like the miracle of the manna in the wilderness. ¶ *Manna.* Literally—the manna. Exod. 16: 4, 15. This miracle they regarded as the greatest one wrought by Moses. “They forgot,” says Stier, “that their fathers disbelieved Moses almost from the time of their eating the manna, as is set forth in the very Psalm to which they refer, and that they even despised the manna and preferred ordinary bread to it.” They seem to challenge Him to show something coming down so directly and plainly from Heaven as the manna. Over 2 million were fed daily, for years, in that miracle.

32. *Moses.* They had not named Moses, but our Lord knew that they credited him with the miracle—and it was not Moses who even gave them the manna, but God. The idea is, also, that in this miracle they did not get the real bread from Heaven, such as He spoke of, but for *that*, they must look to God, who giveth now, the true bread—literally, *the bread from Heaven, which is true.* ¶ *Giveth*—is now giving. ¶ *True.* Substantial, as opposed to shadowy—bread in the highest sense—

33 For the bread of God <sup>a</sup> is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he <sup>b</sup> that

a ver. 48, 58. b Re. 7. 16.

of which the other was only a type—*bread for the soul*.

33. *For.* The great difference between that manna and His bread, is, that this is really from Heaven, and has the wonderful property not merely of sustaining life, but of *giving life unto the world*. It is like the living water, better than that from Jacob's well, and better than anything which they could boast from their ancestry—it would spring up to everlasting life. ¶ *The Bread of God.* The Bread which God provides and supplies, is really of heavenly origin and quality. ¶ *Is He.* Rather—*is that*. Our Lord here means to say that this is the only bread which really comes down from Heaven. The manna came from the clouds. He does not mean as yet to declare Himself as the Bread. This He does in vs. 35.

34. They reply to Him very much as the Samaritan woman replied. As much as to say, if you have any such wonderful bread, give it to us by all means, and evermore. They were willing enough to have some heavenly food like the manna, or better than that, yet of the same kind, to supply their earthly want, so they ask it. Men are ready enough to take any temporal advantage from the Gospel, and are willing often to have churches, schools and a ministry for the good order they bring, and even will *join the church* for its respectability. But they have no idea of asking any spiritual supplies. They will use the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day, (or day by day,) our daily bread," but will not ask for the soul's sustenance.

35. Our Lord now reveals *Himself* as *that bread of God*. So He is, for expiation, the Lamb of God. He declares Himself to be the *Bread of*

cometh to me shall never hunger; and he <sup>c</sup> that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, that ye <sup>d</sup> also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All <sup>e</sup> that the Father giveth

c o. 4. 14; 7. 38. d ver. 64. e ver. 45. o. 17. 6-8, &c.

*Life*, which includes all the ideas of its heavenly origin, and its property of giving life. So He called the benefits He had to bestow, *the living water*, or *the water of life*, when speaking to the Samaritan woman. Ch. 4. He explains—that it is by a believing resort to Him, that the benefits are obtained. He giveth richly "all things that pertain to life and godliness." 2 Pet. 1: 3. This is not merely by His teaching—but by His entire provisions of *grace*. We take his finished work—His atonement—His righteousness—His Spirit—and "of His fullness we receive, and grace for grace." And hence, He adds to the benefits of coming to Him, that besides ceasing to hunger we shall cease to thirst. The doctrine here taught, is, that Christ, in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the provisions of grace, is the proper sustenance of the soul. ¶ *Never thirst.* This He adds to show that it is not merely natural bread which He offers which could not satisfy *thirst*; but rather a full provision for all the soul's wants, of every kind; and thus He directs their attention to higher views of His salvation. And hence, He varies the language so as to show that by coming to Him is to be understood, *believing* on Him.

36. *But.* He now, after this plain statement of the way for receiving His provisions of grace, charges them with their deep-seated unbelief which would stand in the way of their salvation. They have had opportunities and means for exercising this faith in Him, but in vain. They are, therefore, willfully rejecting these provisions while they pretend to seek them.

37. Though they do not believe, their unbelief shall not make void His gracious mission. If the results

me shall come to me; and him<sup>a</sup> that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from hea-

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 102, 17. Is. 1, 18; 55, 7. Matt. 11, 28. Lu. 23, 43, 44. 1 Ti. 1, 15, 16. Ro. 22, 17.

depended on men alone, none would accept His offers. But He acts in covenant with the Father, as He is also sent by the Father, and comes to carry out the eternal plan of redemption. Though men do not incline to come to Him, it is not of him that willeth, but of *God that sheweth mercy*. And those who shall come to Him, are given to Him by the Father. The Shepherd has his sheep. And all the malice of hell could not defeat His purposes of grace. They may be certain of His success with MANY, though *they* should refuse and perish. And if they persist in rejecting Him, they only prove themselves thus to be such as the Father has not given to Him; and while they boast of worshipping the Father, they show themselves to be not included in the Father's grace. This would be calculated to awake their fears, lest they be proving themselves outcasts; and it should stir in them a sense of dependence, as in the hands of God. ¶ *All. Literally—every thing—perhaps so worded to include every person and thing—all interests of the world—all commerce, all wealth, all government, all power of men, and also everything pertaining to every one of my people, even to their dust.* So in vs. 39, He speaks of losing *nothing* of whatever is given Him. ¶ *And him.* With this declaration of their dependence and of the divine sovereignty, He sweetly invites them to come. Whatever they may think of the former declaration, this is all they could ask. It opens the way to whosoever will, to take freely the living bread and the water of life. The former clause relates to the securities which He has of success in His work. This relates to the securities which men have of success in their application to Him. Would men have Christ die without any certainty of saving any? Does

ven, not to do mine own will but<sup>b</sup> the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will<sup>c</sup> which hath sent me, that of all

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 40, 7, 8. c. 5, 30. c Matt. 18, 14. c. 10, 28; 17, 12; 18, 9. 2 Ti. 2, 19.

this hinder any being saved? No, surely! It is just the very efficient help which any one has in coming to the only salvation. ¶ *No wise.* The terms are the same which are rendered in vs. 35, *never*. It is a double negative, and signifies *by no means—not at all*. Christ disappoints no right expectation. They who are lost are such as repose no confidence in Him according to the Gospel, and hence, no confidence is violated or disappointed. All who rest and trust in Him, will find Him all that they expected or could expect. "The doctrine of the Gospel, says Calvin, will be salutary to all believers, because no man becomes a disciple of Christ who does not, on the other hand, feel and experience Him to be a good and faithful teacher."

38. Again, He presses them with the fact that His work is of the Father's planning, and that He Himself comes to men under His direct commission, having, therefore, all the authority He could have, and all which they ought to ask. "Hence, finally, it follows that faith will never be useless."—*Calvin*.

39. He now shows the securities and warrants of His work. "The design of the Father is, that believers may find salvation secured in Christ."—*Calvin*. ¶ *Of all.* He acts under this will of the Father—that He is to lose *nothing* of whatever is given Him. All power in Heaven and earth is given Him, therefore, for this. Matt. 28. The Father hath given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as He had given Him. ch. 17: 2. And this exercise of universal power implies a divine nature in Him. He must be God in order to use it. And this divine and universal power secures EVERY THING appertaining to every one of His people, even their rotten dust, so that He will raise it up at the last day. John refers to this say-

which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that <sup>a</sup> every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will <sup>b</sup> raise him up at the last day.

41 The Jews then murmured at

*a* ver. 47. 54. *c*. 3. 15, 16. *b* c. 11. 25.

ing at the time of our Lord's arrest. ch. 18: 9. His sheep hear His voice—He knows them and they follow Him and He gives unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of His Father's hand. ch. 10: 27, 28.

40. *Which seeth.* He had just charged them with having seen Him, without believing on Him. On the contrary, those who see and believe on Him have eternal life. This is the Father's plan. Not that it is necessary to *see* Him, but to believe the message we have of Him. The believing on Him is in accordance with the truth brought to view; and to believe on Him as He is set forth and freely offered in the Gospel, is the true faith here required. The term here is stronger than that in verse 36, and means more than seeing with the eye. It means rather to *behold* with an awakened attention. The plan secures to such, everlasting life, and in this is secured the raising of the body—since the body and soul together constitute the proper person. The promise of everlasting life includes the promise of the body's resurrection, as Christ will lose nothing of those who are given to Him, and “the adoption,” to wit, the redemption of the body, is waited for by the whole creation. Rom. 8. Eternal life is already begun within such, through their vital union with Christ. See vs. 50. Ch. 11: 26. **OBSERVE**—The revealed will of God is, that whosoever receives Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel, shall be saved. 2. The unrevealed will of God, as to whom the Father hath given to

him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is <sup>c</sup> not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

*c* Matt. 13. 55. Mar. 6. 3. Lu. 4. 22.

Christ, cannot alter or hinder this truth. 3. We can know of our election only so far as we know of the salvation going on within us. If we are chosen to be saved, we shall find ourselves being more and more delivered from the power of sin. 4. “He who is not satisfied with Christ, but indulges in curious inquiries about eternal predestination, such a person, as far as lies in his power, desires to be saved contrary to the purpose of God.”—*Calvin*. If “God has chosen us to salvation,” we may be sure it is “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” 2 Thess. 2: 13. These marks, therefore, we must search for in ourselves, and if we are not sure of having such evidence, we must labor and pray for it.

41. When the Jews found that this much talked of bread of life meant nothing more than Himself, and that He claimed to have come down from heaven, which they could not admit, they murmured; and began at once, to cavil at His lowly origin among them. This, that was a proof of His grace—namely, His condescending to be a man among men, they turned to His reproach, and on this very ground rejected Him. “By our own sinful views we pervert all that belongs to Him, and to His doctrine. It is a great hindrance to us, that only with carnal eyes we behold Christ.”—*Calvin*. “They saw that this coming down from heaven implied some extraordinary mode of coming into the world.”—*Alford*.

43. Our Lord does not satisfy such vain cavilings, but charges it upon them, as a token of their depravity,

44 No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent

me, draw <sup>a</sup> him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

<sup>a</sup> Ca. 1. 4.

which, if left to itself, will be their ruin. Their blindness ought to alarm them. And if they are so ready to cavil at Christ, and yet have no way of salvation except through Christ, they might well take alarm. Here, therefore, by showing His prerogative and their dependence, He would set them inquiring for the way, and asking humbly to be saved. This also would account for their murmuring and rejection of Him. This He does, also, says Calvin, that their unbelief may not disturb weak minds, who depend so much on the opinions of others.

44. *No man can come.* This inability of men to come to Christ is not *physical*, because the coming, which is the same as believing, is not a *bodily* coming. It is an inability growing out of a depraved nature—an inability of heart and will—and yet it is as real and great a hindrance to the soul, as iron bars could be to the body. Until it is removed by Divine power, *no man can come*. It does not mend the matter to say that it is only an inability of heart or will; for this is the worst kind of inability, where the heart and will are so depraved, as not to be able to receive Christ. ¶ *Draw him.* This term shows that this inability is overcome without violence. The term expresses a *drawing* to a certain point. There is another term in the Greek which would more properly express a *dragging by violence*. Here it is not by violence, for the will is incapable of violence. And yet the unwilling are drawn—constrained; powerfully, sweetly, irresistibly made willing. If the will were not averse, there would need no drawing. God's work secures a consenting will. “*Are you not drawn?*” says Augustine. “*Pray that you may be drawn.*” It is what God alone can do—to renew the temper and spirit of the mind, to secure a consenting will, to work an entire regeneration without compulsion; not against the will, but regenerating the will, working in us to

will and to do, or rather, as the terms are, “the willing and the doing,” and that, of His own good pleasure. “As to the kind of drawing,” says Calvin, “it is not violent, so as to compel men by external force, but still it is a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which makes men willing, who formerly were unwilling and reluctant. Those are drawn whose understandings God enlightens, and whose hearts He bends, and forms to the obedience of Christ.” OBSERVE—While some abuse the doctrine of *dependence*, so as to excuse themselves and “wait God's time,” others equally abuse the doctrine of *independence*, so as to wait a more convenient season. 2. Our Lord shows us how cailers are to be treated—they are to be charged with their blindness as being their sin and ruin, and that they have no help but in God. Human dependence, as here taught by our Lord, is so set forth as to put men in the dust to entreat the Divine drawings, for if they provoke Him to abandon them, they are lost forever. 3. How sweet are the workings of Divine grace in the heart—moving among the thoughts and affections, irresistibly and effectually, but without violence, *drawing*, not *driving*—leading along by soft and winning constraints. “Draw us, we will run after thee.” “Those are *drawn*,” says Calvin, “whose minds God illumines, and bends the heart, and forms to the obedience of Christ.” It is done always in consistency with the laws of mind—in use of truth and motive, but not by them as the efficient cause. “Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and *renewing our will*, He doth *persuade* and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.” ¶ *And I will raise him up.* See vs. 40. This is repeated here, as the result which shall follow upon this Divine effectual drawing—

45 It is written <sup>a</sup> in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man <sup>b</sup> therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

a Is. 54. 13. Je. 31. 34. Mi. 1. 2. b Matt. 11. 27.

the same as is noted, vs. 40, to follow upon *believing*. This implies that the *drawing*, by the Father, works this *believing*, and is always so exhibited in the life. They who believe are the same persons as those who are drawn by the Father. They come to Christ believingly for salvation. This promise of a final resurrection is given as comprising everything—including death and the grave, and compassing the results of the last day. This shows that *everything* will be done for them.

45. *The prophets*. This is expressed in substance by different prophets. Jer. 31: 34; Micah 4: 1-4. But our Lord quotes from the book of "the Prophets," that is, from that division of the Old Testament scriptures known as "the Prophets," (in distinction from "the Law," and "the Psalms,") and refers probably to the passage in Isa. 54: 3, which pointed to gospel times. This quotation is used to enforce what He had just said. This *teaching of God* belongs to their *drawing*. The Holy Spirit is the great Teacher, and in this *effectual drawing or calling*, He convinces us of our sin and misery, enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renews our wills, and so He *persuades* and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel. ¶ *Heard, &c.* This is the fruit of the divine teaching just spoken of. In vs. 40, it was expressed as seeing the Son and believing on Him, that was the great requisite. And here it is declared that in order to this believing, we must *hear the Father and learn of Him*. It is by receiving the Divine instructions that any one comes to Christ. This is the human side of the matter. The Divine side was just mentioned, the Father's drawing. The things revealed belong unto us. We are not to sit idly waiting for the Divine con-

46 Not <sup>c</sup> that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; <sup>d</sup> he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you,

c c. 5. 37. d Lu. 10. 22.

straints, but we are to hear and learn from God's revealed truth, and embrace the offered salvation. Those who so hear and learn of God in the gospel, humbly receiving and applying the Divine word, do come to Christ, and only such.

46. Here our Lord cautions against misunderstanding His words. He does not mean that only those who have some personal and face to face audience with the Father—as Moses on Sinai, come to Christ; for no man has had a personal, immediate vision of God. ¶ *Save He, &c.* He has seen the Father, as others have not, because He dwells in His bosom, ch. 1: 18,—comes forth from Him and declares Him—is the only one who can possibly make Him known to men. Here thus our Lord insists on His Divinity and Humanity, as the Son of God. This is the sense of the passage, (ch. 3: 13,) "No man hath ascended up to heaven save He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven."

47. Our Lord labors to show the simple plan of salvation, in opposition to all their vain speculations. It is not going up to heaven to see the Father, but receiving and embracing Christ, who alone has seen the Father, and who, as dwelling in His bosom, is alone able and authorized to reveal Him. He therefore repeats in substance, the declaration made (vs. 40,) as to the only way of being saved. ¶ *Hath*. There is this additional idea here—that the believer is already in possession of eternal life—"hath"—(not as in vs. 40, "that he may have" as something only future.) He has the life already in him, which shall grow up in all things into Christ, who is the Head. "Where the Bread of



\* He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I <sup>b</sup> am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and <sup>c</sup> are dead.

50 This is the bread which com-

a ver. 40. b ver. 33, 35, 51. c Zec. 1. 5.

Life is, there is Life, even before the last day."—*Bengel*. See ch. 3.

48. This is so, *because* Christ is the Bread of Life, whose property it is to give life to those who partake of Him. Herein He shows the difference between partaking Him and eating the manna—and the superiority of Himself to the manna, as that, rather, which the manna *typified*. Hence, a portion of the manna was preserved in a golden vessel, and laid away in the Holy of Holies within the ark of the covenant, along with the tables of the covenant (Heb. 9: 4; Exod. 16: 33, 34) and the rod of Aaron that budded—and so it was carried about with the tabernacle as a sacred memorial of that *miracle* not only, but of Christ, the *Bread of Life*. The *Shew-bread* also in the holy place, which was renewed every week—a portion for each of the tribes—pointed forward to Him as the only perfect exhibition of obedience—and as bringing in and setting before us a finished righteousness acceptable to God. He intimates all along, too, that the miracle by which He was given to the world is far superior to that of the manna in the wilderness. The proofs of His Divine origin are far greater than the proofs of the manna being from heaven. ¶ *That bread*. The words here are the same as in vs. 35 rendered "*the bread*," and so they should be translated here. Yet He was really what the manna foreshadowed—and the Bread of Life, as the manna was not.

49. *Manna*. See vs. 31. Rather "the manna" of which they boasted. "That bread in the wilderness had no power to give even natural life, nor to sustain it beyond the time when it was eaten. Their (unbelieving) fathers, of whom they spake, (vs. 31,) who ate and murmured and rebelled, died long

eth down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and <sup>d</sup> not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that

d ver. 58.

ago—and great as their unbelieving children now regard that miracle of the manna, it had no life-giving effect for them, nor benefit beyond the wilderness where their carcasses fell." He says "*your fathers*." Though Himself a Jew, He had a higher origin. vs. 42.

50. *This*. By way of contrast now, He shows the excellence of Himself, in His fullness. 1. That He really came down from heaven in a truer, higher sense than the manna, as He came from the bosom of the Father, where He dwelt. 2. LIFE is the object of His coming, and the effect upon those who partake of Him. ¶ *A man*. Literally, "*that any one*." The terms show the extent of the offer, and the saving result to "*whosoever will*." Those who were dead in trespasses and sins are quickened, made alive, and are saved from the second death. Even death in its temporary power over the body has no *dominion* over such. Rom. 6; Colos. 3. OBSERVE—1. Temporal good may leave a man to perish eternally. 2. How many who fared sumptuously are now in torment. 3. Christ can satisfy us in adversity, can fortify us in death, and can save us forever.

51. He now changes the terms from "Bread of Life," to "Living Bread." This would signify that He *has life in Himself*, and that thus He is the Bread of Life, able to give life to all who feed upon Him: and that He came from heaven, from the Father, who gave Him power over all flesh, as Mediator, "that He should give eternal life to as many as He had given Him." ¶ *If any man*. Now he conveys the idea that eternal life was the certain effect of feeding upon Him, personally. But how could any feed upon Him? This was the mystery. This He now explains. The bread which He has been

I will give is my flesh,<sup>a</sup> which I will give for the life<sup>b</sup> of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> He, 10. 5; 10. 20. <sup>b</sup> c, 3. 16. 1 Jno. 2. 2. <sup>c</sup> c. 3. 9.

speaking of, and offering to give, is His flesh. The figure is henceforth dropped. The bread is no further spoken of, but Himself. *His flesh*, which He meant all along by the bread—this He was to give, by His death on the cross, as the Lamb of God, and the substitute for sinners who will accept His offered salvation. This is the way in which He is to become the Bread of Life to all who believe on Him. These words would be understood more fully at His death. ¶ *The world*. The manna was only for their fathers, but His flesh is given for all people, and not alone for the Jews—as explained already—(vs. 50)—that *any one* may eat thereof and not die. See ch. 3: 16.

52. *The Jews*. These are, as before, the persecuting rulers—the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Strove*. They not merely murmured at Him, but began to quarrel among themselves; some, probably, having an idea of the spiritual sense, and others treating it literally, as absurd. *OBSERVE*—They stumble as Nicodemus did, at what seems so impossible according to the *letter*. “How can a man be born when he is old?” “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” Our Lord replies in very much the same manner as to Nicodemus: He does not soften the terms, nor retract any thing; but rather insists the more, and speaks not only of eating His flesh, but also of drinking His blood. *OBSERVE*—1. Persons who are utterly without piety may nevertheless earnestly strive about religious things. 2. A spirit of bitterness in controversy shows more regard for self than for the truth. So their unbelieving fathers, whom they now boasted, had asked in the wilderness, “Can He give meat also? Can He furnish a table in the wilderness?”

53. He uses here similar expressions to those used in the institution of the Lord’s Supper, (Luke 22: 19,) and

can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

plainly refers to the same great truth, in both cases. We are habitually to feed on Him—on His finished work—on His promises—and on all His benefits—just as we live on our daily food. This great truth would be set forth by lively symbols afterwards, and then they would more fully understand it. He used the bread and cup in the Lord’s Supper with the same meaning, showing that “the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.” His language, in both cases, is meant to set forth *Christ and Him crucified, as the living food and drink of the soul*. Of course it cannot be meant as Papists vainly hold, that eating the bread and drinking the wine at the Lord’s Supper, is eating His real body, and drinking His real blood—for it is plain from all the connexion, that He speaks of Himself as to be eaten in a figurative, spiritual sense, just as He calls Himself *bread*, figuratively. Besides, it is plain from the context, that this eating and drinking is the same with believing—for the same benefits are connected with the two. And partaking of the Lord’s Supper cannot be meant here, because it was not yet instituted, and could, therefore, have no application to those who were then addressed for their present practice and salvation. Nor could it have been intelligible at all to them, if it referred simply to the partaking of the sacrament. But “*this gives to us in words, what the Lord’s Supper gives to us in visible action*.”—*Dr Costa*. A misapprehension of this passage in the third century, as referring to the sacrament, and making it thus absolutely requisite for salvation, led to the absurd practice of administering the Lord’s Supper to infants

Except <sup>a</sup> ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso <sup>b</sup> eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 26. 26, 28 <sup>b</sup> ver. 40.

Besides, the Papists maintain that *eating* at the sacrament is enough, and deny to the people the privilege of *drinking*; while here, our Lord connects the two, and requires both eating and drinking, so that the Papists contradict themselves. Our Lord would have us live upon Him, and partake of Him in every way, and both for meat and for drink—that is, for *our ail*. To eat His flesh is to apply to ourselves Christ's Person and sacrifice—for His body was broken that *each may have a part*. And it is to live upon Him as our living Lord and portion. To drink His blood, is to apply and partake for ourselves, His satisfaction, as the ground of remission; and so to be refreshed by a sense of pardoned sin. ¶ *No life in you*. Because He is the only source of life to the soul, they who do not feed upon Him—in His offered grace—as the only sacrifice for sin, and the only hope and sustenance of the soul, cannot have life in them. By rejecting Him, they also prove that they are without spiritual life. “The Jews asked about the *possibility*. Jesus replied by declaring the *necessity* of it.”—Bengel.

54. Our Lord here shows that this eating and drinking is the same with *believing* on Him—for it has the same result. See vs. 47. It puts eternal life in the possession of such an one. He *has* it, even now, by having Christ, the life of the soul, for his portion. This would show them that the eating and drinking were spiritually meant. The same truth would be more expressly symbolized in the Lord's Supper. ¶ *Raise him up*. Such a partaker of Christ, namely, the one who believes on Him, shall enjoy all the benefits here promised, (vss. 39,

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, <sup>c</sup> and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth <sup>d</sup> my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth <sup>e</sup> in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father;

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 4. 7. <sup>d</sup> La. 3. 24. <sup>e</sup> c. 15. 4. 1 Jno. 3. 24; 4. 15, 16.

40,) even to the final and glorious resurrection of the body, which is the crowning act. Luther says, “When I reflect how Christ was crucified for me, it ought not to be a mere thought, but over and above the thought I should have such an heart as builds upon Christ, whose flesh and blood I receive into my heart, and consider it as being given for me.”

55. *For*. This assigns a reason for such benefits of feeding upon Christ as had just been named. ¶ *Indeed*. This is opposed to the doubt expressed by the Jews. My flesh is truly, really *meat*. All other meat is but a faint shadow of this in its power of sustaining life. To partake Christ so as to live upon the benefits of His incarnation and vicarious Sacrifice, is the only true style of living. They who feed upon Him as He is offered in the gospel, have the most substantial food. It is not a mere idea. It is a living reality. They are sustained and supported more than by daily bread.

56. This is just because such a partaking of Christ as is here meant, makes Christ part of the believer's life. Christ enters into such an one; and as food becomes part of the system, so Christ enters into such, and there is a living union. For such to live is Christ. ¶ *Dwelleth*. Rather, *abideth*. See ch. 15: 5. The term is the same as is used of abiding in the *vine*. The reference is to the vital union which exists between the true believer and Christ. It is not any mere theoretic faith, which receives the doctrine of Christ as part of one's creed. It is a partaking, feeding upon Christ in His Person and offices for life and salvation. And this He labors to make clear in every way.

so <sup>a</sup> he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers <sup>b</sup> did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

a 1 Cor. 15, 22. b ver. 49-51.

57. The vital union is even like that which exists between Him and the Father. See ch. 5: 26. The whole doctrine is further set forth—that as the living Father, who is the fountain of life (ch. 5: 26,) hath commissioned Him, and given Him as Mediator, to have life in Himself, that He should give eternal life to His people, (Col. 1: 19,) and as He lives by virtue of His union with the Father, so, he that eateth—*feedeth upon Him*—shall live by virtue of his union with Him, and because Christ lives, he shall live also, in Him as the source of his soul's life. ch. 5: 28. ¶ *By me.* 1. The partakers of Christ shall have life by Him, as He has procured life by His death, for sinners. 2. He gives life, and *that* life is perpetuated. He gives life from the dead—life over death—life in death—and life after death. “What is stated amounts to this, that God the Father in whom life dwells, is at a great distance from us, and that Christ placed between us, is the second cause of life in order that what would be otherwise concealed in God, may proceed from Him to us.”—*Calvin.* OBSERVE.—Though some would make this refer to eating the Lord's Supper, it is such an eating of Christ, as to *live by Him*, and not by the *sacrament*.

58. Our Lord here sums up what He had said. ¶ *This is.* Of this kind—having these qualities which He had set forth. *Such is the bread.* ¶ *Which came.* He returns to the comparison of this Bread with the manna, as at the beginning of His discourse. And now He speaks of this Bread as having already come down from heaven, referring plainly to His own descent from above. ¶ *Not as.* The contrast which He insists on between this Bread and

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

the manna which they boasted—is that the partakers of it, (of Himself,) have eternal life, while those who ate the manna, are dead. *He*, therefore, is the true Bread, which can not only sustain life at the time it is eaten, but can give life and *life eternal*. Hence, He is more to be valued than that manna in the wilderness, and His being sent from God to men, is a greater miracle, and should be received as a more majestic display of Divine love, than that daily raining down of food for so many years, for two millions of people, around their wilderness camp; or, than that feeding of the thousands on the few loaves. Bread of heaven! feed me till I want no more.—“There is no reason why you should prefer Moses to Me because he fed your fathers in the wilderness, since I supply you with far more excellent food, for I bring heavenly life with Me.”—*Calvin.*

59. This important discourse was public, and John notes the place. ¶ *The Synagogue.* The same Synagogue, doubtless, which the faithful centurion built, as a lover of the Jewish nation. Luke 7: 5.

60. *An hard saying.* The term here used is generally applied in the New Testament by way of reproach, as harsh, repugnant, rough. It does not mean “hard to be understood.” *Calvin* says, “it was in their *hearts*, not in the *saying*, that the harshness lay.” These who are here called disciples, were such as attended upon His teachings, but of course, were not truly His followers. See Matt. 17: 16; 10: 24. ¶ *Saying, or discourse,* referring to all that He had said about the true Bread, which He had summed up at the close. ¶ *Can hear it.* Literally, *who is able to*

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye shall see the

hear it? Who can endure to hear such things?

61. *Knew in Himself.* It is implied that they did not utter their complaints aloud, so that He could hear—but that He knew from His own Omniscience even of human hearts, all that they thought and said. ¶ *Offend.* Literally, *scandalize*. Is this a stumbling block and offence to you? 1. He had claimed to be Himself a greater miraculous gift, than the manna. He asserted His Divine origin, and the need of living on Him, in terms such as seemed absurd, or ridiculous to them. They were offended that He should thus, in such strange language, set Himself before the highest gifts to their fathers, and make Himself and their partaking of Him, essential to their salvation. This was putting great dishonor upon Moses and the Fathers, and exalting Himself, who seemed to them none other than the son of Joseph and Mary, to a position which they could not appreciate. The necessity of Christ and His atonement for being saved, is always an offence to the natural heart.

62. He meant now to declare, that there was a yet higher truth more difficult and harsh, to common, unrenewed understandings. Instead of explaining that of which they complained, He further asserted His dignity and Divinity. "What if possibly ye may see the Son of Man *ascending up where He was before?*" What a convincing proof of His coming down from heaven was reserved for all cavilers in the fact, soon to be realized, of His ascending up *where He was before!* So our Lord often met His caviling opponents, by presenting still higher truths, which should yet come home with overwhelming evidence to their souls, as the last judgment, &c. As He would ascend to heaven, it could not

Son of man ascend <sup>a</sup> up where he was before?

63 It <sup>b</sup> is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you,

a c. 3. 13. Mar. 16. 19. Ep. 4. 8-10. b 2 Cor. 3. 6.

be His bodily flesh, upon which they were to feed.

63. *The Spirit.* The Spirit is that which quickeneth—or giveth life. It was not "the corporal and carnal" eating of His flesh that was to be saving. It is the province of the Spirit to give life. So He had already shown to Nicodemus. ch. 3. Their views of His doctrine were low and groveling. How He was bread, and living bread, and how they were to eat Him, and how this was essential to their salvation, seemed to them simply absurd—and so they murmured—while their pride also was wounded by His pretensions. Hence He vindicates His discourse from their low, literal construction of it. They were like the Papists, in supposing that any eating of His flesh, or drinking of His blood, could be required, or could be saving. So He charges them that their low and carnal aim after the loaves and fishes, was vain and profitless, unworthy of His greater work. ¶ *The words.* His doctrine was received by them only in a carnal way. The words, however, which He used were to be taken spiritually—and they are "the Sword of the Spirit," (Eph. 6: 17,) and "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword"—(He. 4: 12.)—they are "the incorruptible seed"—the living germs—which spring up by the power of the Holy Ghost, to a true life in the soul. They are not empty sounds—they are not gross absurdities. They are spirit—life-giving—the seeds which the Spirit vitalizes—the sword which the Spirit wields—and *they are life*, in the renewed soul—giving life from the dead—and full of life, energizing the renewed conduct. "We are born again—by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever."

*they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew \* from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said

a Ro. 8. 29. 2 Ti. 2. 19.

64. *But.* The difficulty is not in the truth, but in your unbelieving spirit. ¶ *Knew, &c.* This directly asserts our Lord's omniscience, as such knowledge implies a perfect understanding of the heart, and of the future conduct and result. ¶ *Betray Him.* He even looked forward to the issues of all this opposition in the closing transaction of His life, when the same bitter hostility of the human heart to His doctrines of grace, should bring out a Judas to deliver Him up to death. "He knew all things that would come upon Him." Ch. 18: 4.

65. *Therefore.* Their conduct, and His perfect foreknowledge of it, would explain what He had said before, that with such obstinate, inborn depravity, no man could come unto Him except by Divine grace drawing him—giving him the renewal will and enlightened understanding—vss. 44, 45. All their inability lay in their spirit of unbelief—their willful hardness and blindness. This would always make it impossible for them to apprehend and receive Christ's words of truth and grace, except by the almighty and irresistible operation of God. ¶ *Given.* Calvin says, He here uses the word *give* instead of *draw*, (vs. 44,) to show that there is no other reason why God draws, than because out of free grace He loves us. Those whom the Father gives to Christ (vs. 37) to them He gives to come to Christ.

66. *From that time.* Though the word "*time*" is in *italics*, it is fairly *implied* in the Greek terms: and they could not mean "from that *circumstance*," as that would be expressed by another phrase. ¶ *Went back.* This is explained by the next clause. They

I<sup>b</sup> unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, \* and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ?

b ver. 44, 45. c Zep. 1. 6. Lu. 9. 62. He. 10. 38.

ceased to attend upon His teaching. It does not mean any such thing as that they were Christians, and ceased to be such, or fell from grace. Those who are really the Lord's, will persevere to the end. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. OBSERVE—1. Not all who outwardly profess Christ, and wait upon Him in the public teachings, are true Christians. 2. How strange that what is the life and soul of all true believers should be an offence to the mere worldly professor. Only they who feel their need can relish the plan of grace and salvation by Christ. 3. These were attracted to Christ by His furnishing the loaves and fishes. When He proposed, beyond this, to give food for the soul forever, they murmured like their unbelieving fathers in the wilderness.

67. *The twelve.* The apostles. These were but men, liable to be affected by the turning away of others. He would try their spirit of faith now, at a time when the spirit of unbelief was prevalent. Instead of *twelve*, scores probably went away. They were outnumbered by the skeptical, murmuring, caviling throng. This has great power with some. Many are staggered by hearing of crowds turning infidel. But the question is, whether they have taken up this religion, just by the popularity of it, and so are ready to go away when the love of many waxes cold. This is a test which our Lord puts now to the twelve. OBSERVE—Our Lord was always jealous of the sinners' love—anxious for it—applying for it—testing it, so as to make it sure. Amazing condescension, that says to Peter, "*Lovest thou me?*"—and to us all, "*Will ye also go away?*" He had,

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the <sup>a</sup> words of eternal life.

69 And <sup>b</sup> we believe and are

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 5. 20; 7. 38. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 16. 6. c. 1. 29; 11. 27.

and has still, a human nature that could be grieved by desertion, and comforted by the devotion of men!

68. *Simon Peter.* This apostle answers promptly for the rest, as in Matt. 16: 16, perhaps because one of the first that was called to be a disciple, (ch. 1: 42,) and one of the first called to be an apostle. Mark 1: 17. ¶ *To whom.* This expresses the genuine feeling of every true believer—that there is none like Christ, that none teaches like Him—loves like Him, or saves like Him—and that if our hope in Him must be given up, we must despair forever. It is not a question between Him and others—any other—but between Him and despair. How cruel are the skeptics, who would try to reason away from the soul this only hope for eternity. ¶ *The words.* Peter here acknowledges the living, life-giving power which Christ claimed for His words. It is just because Christ's words are spirit and life, that we cannot go away from Him. Because they pledge to us eternal life, and are the words upon which He has caused us to hope, (Ps. 119: 49,) therefore, we cannot leave Him. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ”—that is, the love which Christ has displayed to us, as it is revealed in the Gospel? Rom. 8.

69. *We believe.* Literally—*we have believed.* He speaks absolutely—“We believe, and have always done so.” This is substantially the same thing that Peter confessed so remarkably, (Matt. 16: 16,) and for which Christ pronounced him blessed, and gave him his new name, and promised him *the keys*, which he gave to the eleven. Peter here, as there, speaks in the name of all the apostles. ¶ *And are sure.* This expresses the strongest confidence. Faith was confirmed by

11\*

sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a <sup>c</sup> devil?

c. 13. 27.

their experience. Bengel remarks, that here, knowledge follows faith, (2 Pet. 1: 5,) and that they are perverse who demand knowledge before faith, for it follows faith and obedience. Ch. 7: 17; 2 Cor. 5: 1; 1 John 5: 20. ¶ *That Christ.* The Christ—the Anointed One—prophesied as to come. Some texts read—“the holy one of God.” The reasons here added for not forsaking Christ, are sober, solid and sufficient. Who that ever knew this Saviour could be induced to forsake Him? How blessed to have such a gracious and glorious friend—the Son of God—the giver of eternal life.

70. *Have not I chosen, &c.* This reply of our Lord must have greatly shocked the confident Peter, who was so ready to speak for them all. The Master here declares, that so far from all of them being so bound fast to Him, as Peter had just affirmed, one of them was, to his own knowledge, a *devil*. This, of course, would prompt them to self-examination. No reply of Peter, or of any of them, is recorded. But this astounding remark of our Lord would show his reason for asking, “Will ye also go away?” vs. 67. If Judas had not already been hardened, he must have felt like withdrawing or repenting. But perhaps his heart had not yet been drawn out—his hypocrisy may not yet have fully developed even to his own view. Perhaps like many a formal, hollow-hearted professor, he gave outward assent to the apostolic confession of Peter. It only needed the hour of temptation to come, in order to bring out the black hypocrisy of his heart. ¶ *Twelve.* Literally—you, the twelve. Bengel remarks that the article has great force here. *The twelve chosen ones*—these here before me—have a devil among them—“*one of the twelve.*” So in the narrative of

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son of Simon*: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Judas's treachery, it is again emphatically said—It was Judas Iscariot, "*one of the twelve!*" How dreadful to have it said, this or that criminal is a professor of religion—a *member*, or *officer of the church!* Yet, though Judas had been an apostle, he never had been a true Christian—never a sincere, humble believer. Christ had chosen him for one of the twelve, but it is plain from the result that He had not chosen him to *eternal life*—else he would not have fallen away and perished. ch. 10. Our Lord did not here point out Judas as the one to whom he referred. He only threw out for the benefit of all, this positive declaration, as from the searcher of hearts. ¶ *Is a devil.* This is the strongest mode of expressing the diabolical spirit of Judas—that he was animated by the temper of the devil, so as to be among the twelve, what Satan was among the family of God in Heaven. He was a fallen apostle, as Satan was a fallen angel; and soon this would come to light. He said this much beforehand, that when it should come to pass, they might believe. This was meant to touch the heart of Peter, and to set him on his guard.

71. *He spake of Judas.* This is added by the evangelist, not from any thing then said about the particular person, but from what was afterwards made plain by Judas's fall. The other apostles seem to have confided in Judas after this time. He still carried the bag, (ch. 12: 6; 13: 29,) and they did not seem to know that he was meant, even when our Lord declared plainly that one of them should betray Him—until at length He pointed him out. Ch. 13: 26. OBSERVE—1. The forbearance of our Lord toward Judas—allowing him such opportunities of salvation, and bearing for three years with his false professions. 2. Church membership, and even the highest office

## CHAPTER VII.

AFTER these things, Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, be-

in the church may be held for years respectably by a man that is a devil at heart. 3. The lamentable fall of others should make us humble and lead to earnest self-examination.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. *After these things.* It will be observed from the Harmony, (see Synopsis, Notes on Matt.,) that the year between the second and third Passovers of our Lord, is opened by John in ch. 5, and closed with this announcement, in the first verse of ch. 7: so that John has only two chapters of his narrative falling within this second year of our Lord's ministry. The other Evangelists have related the chief events of this year, embracing several important miracles. There are several parables which are not given by John, and also the Sermon on the Mount. ¶ *In Galilee.* Our Lord had been in Galilee during the year. And now the emphasis is upon the verb "*walked*"—which literally means "*walked about*"—*traversed*—and comes also to refer to one's *course of living*. The meaning here would seem to be—He went about still in Galilee, when it might have been expected that after so long a time he would go into Judea—and especially as the yearly feasts would naturally take Him up to Jerusalem. It is mentioned to introduce the account of His not going up at first to this feast. From ch. 5: 18, we find that already at the beginning of this year, and immediately after the second Passover, the leaders of the Jews were showing their hatred towards Him. But His hour was not yet come, and He therefore kept out of their way, when He might lawfully do so. So we find that He *went about* in Galilee at the opening of the next year, traveling to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and to the coasts of Decapolis. The incidents are related chiefly by the other Evangel-



cause the Jews sought to kill him.

¶ 2 Now the Jews, feast <sup>a</sup> of tabernacles was at hand.

*a* Le. 23. 34.

ists, (as the sending forth of the Seventy, &c.,) and John passes over this tour with the simple statement in this verse, §66, and continues the narrative at §81. ¶ *Jewry*. This is in the Greek "*Judea*." The name here given is the old English name. It refers to the southern division of Palestine, below Samaria. See map, *Matthew*. ¶ *Because*. The reason for this course is here given. The hostility of the Jews here mentioned, that is, the leaders of the Jews, was fast ripening to bloody violence. It was not the common people, but the persecuting, bitter Sanhedrim, who were seeking to put Him to death, as will be seen in the ensuing verses. OBSERVE—That the 11th verse of this chapter brings us to the Festival of Tabernacles, which was only about six months before His death. We come now immediately to His final departure from Galilee.

### PART V.

*From our Lord's Third Passover until His final departure from Galilee, at the Feast of Tabernacles.*

Time, six months.

§ 81. JESUS GOES UP TO THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES. HIS FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE. INCIDENTS IN SAMARIA.

|       |       |           |          |
|-------|-------|-----------|----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke.     | John.    |
|       |       | 9. 51-56. | 7. 2-10. |

Luke, in the parallel record, makes no mention of this incident, but records the conduct of the Samaritans, who refused Him the hospitalities of their country on this last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. James and John therefore asked if they should call down fire from heaven to consume them.

2. *Feast of Tabernacles*. Literally, *The Feast of TENTS*. It was in commemoration of the Israelites' dwelling

3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

in tents or booths in the wilderness, when they were brought out of Egypt. The feast commenced on the 14th and 15th of the seventh month Tisri, which is our last of September and first of October. Deut. 16: 13, &c.; Numb. 29: 12. It was one of the three principal feasts of the Jews. It was also connected with the celebration of the vintage, as the Passover and Pentecost were also connected with the harvest celebrations. At this festival of Tabernacles, the Jews were accustomed to erect booths, of palm branches and willows, or poplars, and to dwell in them as their fathers did in passing through the desert; so bringing to mind those wonderful events in their history, which they were wont to sing in their triumphal psalms.

3. *His brethren*. The question has been much discussed, whether these were His actual brethren, born of the same mother, or only near relatives, as cousins. The term here used sometimes has this sense. Some hold that our Lord had no brothers or sisters. But they are referred to by name, along with His parents, as showing His lowly origin. Matt. 13: 55. See also Ps. 69: 8. It is urged that if Mary had had other sons, it is not probable that they would have had the same names as the sons of Mary the wife of Cleopas—the cousins—one of whom was called James, another Josés, (Matt. 27: 56,) and especially that the title, "Mary the mother of James and Josés," would not have been used to distinguish the latter. 2. That if the mother of our Lord had had own sons besides him, He would scarcely have committed his mother to John's care instead of to theirs. But this is not conclusive, for all along He declared that his nearest relatives were his most faithful disciples—"he who doeth the will of God, the same is my brother

4 For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.*

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My <sup>b</sup> time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

a Mar. 3. 21. b c. 2. 4; 8. 20. ver. 8. 20.

and sister and mother." Mark 3: 35. And 3. That the family of David seems to have been regarded in the prophets as ending with our Lord. But on the contrary, verse 5 lays a stress upon the unbelief of these brethren, as though they were of His own nearest kin. If so, there could have been no brothers of our Lord among the twelve, unless we understand "the brethren" as applied here to the majority of them, with a single exception. It is urged by those who take the former view, that the "James" who was so prominent at the Apostolic Synod in Jerusalem (Acts 15) was now an unbeliever—and that, as in the case of Paul, he who held out so long in unbelief, became afterwards most eminent in the service of the Master, and yet was not an apostle. It was held by early writers that these were sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, and thus were only half-brothers of our Lord. See note Matt. 12: 47.

¶ *Depart hence.* These brethren have as yet taken only the lowest views of His wonderful character. They seem to have some faint notion of His majesty and superiority, but they treat it in the most secular way. They would have Him go to Judea to make a show of Himself. They say this perhaps not so much in derision as in vacillation; not knowing what to make of Him, but urging Him here to show Himself. They doubtless thought that at the feast, when crowds would be thronging Jerusalem, He would have the best opportunity of making Himself conspicuous. ¶ *Thy disciples.* Those in Judea who had become His disciples in His previous visit. Ch. 4: 1-3. As He had now been so long in Galilee, those in Judea had not witnessed His recent miracles. Or the reference may be to the disciples who

would be assembled from all quarters at the feast. There may also be a reference here to the desertion of many disciples, which had just occurred. Ch. 6: 66. When these brethren say, "*thy disciples*," they seem to imply that they themselves are not of the number. See vs. 5.

4. *For.* The reason which is urged is one of principle—that as He sought to do wonders, He would naturally bring these wonderful works to public view, since, on His own principle, a candle is not lighted to be put under a bed, or a bushel, but to give light to all that are in the house. Matt. 5: 15. ¶ *If thou do.* This, perhaps, implies a doubt. If there is no mistake about all this wonder working, and if, really, as it seems, thou doest these wonders, make thyself manifest to the world. Do not remain here in the obscurity of Galilee, but go up to Jerusalem among the crowds.—Perhaps, as His brethren, they were disposed, if He had any such greatness, to get the advantage of His fame. Yet, on the whole, they had no spiritual convictions of His Divinity.

5. *For.* This verse connects closely with the preceding, and is intended to define the position of these brethren—and to show their unbelief, as the basis of the foregoing question. ¶ *Neither.* This may be read, *not even.* It is meant to call attention to the fact that even those who were so related to Him, did not believe on Him. OBSERVE.—It is not natural fleshly relations, nor any outward affinities or opportunities that can secure faith in any. It is only the power and grace of God, the Holy Spirit.

6. *My time.* Literally—The convenient time, which is mine. His time—His set time, according to the Divine plan—for manifestation to the world,

7 The <sup>a</sup> world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go

*a c. 15. 19.*

and for going up to the feast, was not yet. There were reasons why it was not yet the suitable time, and He was not at liberty to go up on such carnal principles as they suggested. He acted under a Divine commission and with regard to the Divine will.—In the following verses where the idea is repeated, it is implied that the present hindrance, was the bitter hatred of the world. ¶ *Your time.* They had no such thing in their way. They would be kept back by no such principle as His, and by no such enmity as He must encounter. ¶ *Always ready.* They could go up at any time. “Like does not cast off like.” “They are fine fellows,” says Luther—“they have kind High-priests. If I would speak what the Papists wished to hear, I could easily go to Magdeburg or Rome, as Bishop.”—From vs. 10-12, we see how well He foreknew the opposition which would be shown towards Him, when He should arrive at Jerusalem.

7. *The world.* He now explains further His delay, on account of the enmity He would meet, and this enmity was grounded in deep principles of the human heart. He was not of the world, else the world would love its own; but because He was not of the world, therefore the world hated Him and His disciples. ¶ *Because I testify, &c.* He here gives the reason of the human enmity He must meet. The world hated Him because He faithfully bore witness against their doings. They were animated by the opposite spirit. This is also the ground on which faithful ministers of Christ will often be opposed by the ungodly world.

8. *Go ye up.* Do ye go up, and not wait for me. ¶ *I go not up yet.* Some manuscripts read, “I go not up,” which some understand as meaning, I do not intend to go. But this could

not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were

not be the meaning, as the verb is in the present. I go not up, at present, and in the reason which He gives immediately He adds, “for my time is *not yet fully come.*” This is abundant to show that He did not mean to deny any *purpose* of going at another time. Yet such poor pretences do infidels seize upon, like those persecuting Jews to find some accusation against our Lord. This was the aim of Porphyry, and of others, since. But this only shows what Christ here declares, that the world of ungodly men hate Him.

9. *When He had said.* Having so expressed Himself, He accordingly remained, while they went up. He did not go in their company. He would thus avoid going up with unbelievers, and He would not mingle with the excited crowds along the roads. He would also avoid exciting the jealousy of the Jewish rulers, by going up with a throng. Later in the feast, the excitement would be less, than if He had appeared in the caravan of His relatives and countrymen, when all were on the look-out for Him.

10. *Then went He also.* He waited until after His brethren had gone—a day or two, for He arrived and had made already much stir before the fourth day, or “midst of the feast,” (vs. 14,) which lasted seven days. ¶ *Not openly.* Not in the common caravan parties. The custom was for neighbors and kinsfolk to go up in company. Luke 2: 41. This is still the custom of the country. We saw them in groups of fifty and a hundred, thronging the chief roads, and with music and banners going up to Jerusalem on feast days. ¶ *But as it were.* This rendering of the Greek particle conveys a wrong sense as though there was a show of secrecy, or an affectation of it, without the fact. The par-

gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

¶ 11 Then <sup>a</sup> the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where <sup>is</sup> he?

12 And <sup>b</sup> there was much murmuring among the people concern-

a c. 11. 56. b c. 6. 19.

ticle here, commonly rendered "as," is also used to express the intention. See Acts 17: 14, where the same wrong idea is given in the translation, "to go as it were to the sea," but where the *real intention* is meant to be expressed, and not any false pretence—"to go as to the sea."—Luke now relates the healing of ten lepers, in a Samaritan village, on His way to Jerusalem.

## PART VI.

*The Festival of Tabernacles, and the subsequent transactions until our Lord's arrival at Bethany, six days before the fourth Pass-over.*

Time, six months less one week.

§ 83. JESUS AT THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES—HIS PUBLIC TEACHING.

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
|       |       |       | 7. 11-53. |
|       |       |       | 8. 1.     |

11. *Then the Jews.* As soon as the caravan arrived at Jerusalem, a general excitement and inquiry ensued. "The Jews," here spoken of, are the leaders—the Sanhedrim—and not the people. The latter were more open to conviction. The former were bigoted and bitter—intent on His death. They were all bent on finding Him out. ¶ *Where is He?* Literally—where is *this one*—this fellow. Some suppose that He went up very soon after the caravan, and remained in Jerusalem secretly, until about the middle of the feast, vs. 14.

12. *Murmuring—Muttering of one thing and another—whispering—not speaking openly—for fear of express-*

ing him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

ing any good opinion of Him before the Sanhedrim. ¶ *The people.* These were feeling very differently from the rulers, for the most part. Yet there was a division among them. ¶ *Some.* As His Galilean disciples and the converts of Judea. ¶ *Good.* One of good motives and of honest, benevolent purpose and character in opposition to *deceiving*. ¶ *Others.* There are always *fault-finders* where Christ or His people are found. The name "Satan" means "accuser"—accuser of the brethren, and of Christ. ¶ *Deceiveth.* This is opposed to the *goodness* of character which His friends claimed for Him. Instead of being honest and benevolent, "He deceiveth the people" they said—by setting up false pretences of being the Son of God—the Messiah, &c.

13. *Spake openly.* Literally—with *boldness*. That is—none of His friends made bold to speak their good opinions of Him. These were His advocates in the crowd so far as to give an opinion very cautiously in His favor, where His merits were passingly discussed. But they were not ready to profess Him boldly among His bitter enemies. Many, doubtless, do now profess Him in elegant churches, who would not acknowledge Him in Pilate's judgment hall—nay, many who will not take sides with Him openly against the ungodly world, if it will cost them any sacrifice.

14. *About the midst.* This was probably on a Sabbath. This would seem to have been His first public teaching at Jerusalem: and hence, the inquiry of the Jewish rulers who were persecuting Him. They were evidently astonished at His open, public teaching in the temple. It was the great

15 And <sup>a</sup> the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man <sup>1</sup> letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 13. 54. 1 or, *learning*.

colonnade of the temple where He resorted for this purpose. And at the time of the feast, crowds would naturally be about the temple. This furnished Him a desirable opportunity for His teaching. In the colonnade which surrounded the great space before the courts, the Sanhedrim had their chamber, and in that quarter there was also a synagogue or school for instruction, where the learned Rabbins discussed important points of the law. See Plate, ch. 10: 22.

15. *How knoweth.* No one was permitted to teach publicly who had not been a regular disciple and colleague of a Rabbi for some years. Even then he could only teach the opinions of others. He must be a regular Rabbi in order to be allowed to teach his own opinions. Some do doubt, however, whether this rule was fully established in the time of Christ. ¶ *Letters.* This refers not to Scripture learning except as the Old Testament Scriptures were the only literature of the Jews. The people considered every religious discourse as a proof or pretence of learning, like that of the Rabbins. And this question was asked in order to throw contempt upon Him as unschooled in Jewish learning. So Peter and John were called "unlettered," in the same sense. Acts 4: 13. ¶ *Having never learned.* Having never been the scholar of a Rabbi.

16. Our Lord takes up this challenge and proceeds to show the wide difference between His teachings and those of the Rabbins, and in the same words justifies His unschooled teaching, as having come from the highest source. Here again He presses the Jewish rulers with the stubborn fact, that He taught under a commission (proved by His wonderful works,) from the Jehovah whom they professed to worship and to teach. He had learned of one

said, My doctrine is not <sup>b</sup> mine, but his that sent me.

17 If <sup>c</sup> any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,

<sup>b</sup> c. 8. 28; 12. 49. <sup>c</sup> c. 8. 43.

higher than all their Rabbis—of the one whom their teachers professed to vindicate and to make known.

17. *Will do.* Literally—if any man is *willing to do*. It is not meant that an outward performance of God's commands will insure such a knowledge of the truth—but that a disposition which is set on pleasing God, shall find the truth clear, and the evidence satisfactory. He goes on to show them a sure method of proving His doctrine, and seeing whether it is of God, as He declared. It required only a right state of mind in regard to the practical duties of religion to convince any one respecting the nature and origin of His doctrines. These people were full of professions and of external devotions toward God, but the truth was, that they were intent only on doing their own will and not God's. This principle would strike at the root of their vain pretensions, and show them to be wrong at heart, and at enmity with God and His revealed will. This would show the nature and ground of their darkness. Calvin says, "A right judgment in regard to divine things, flows from the fear and the reverence of God. If, therefore, they had possessed minds penetrated with the fear of God, they would easily have known of His doctrine, whether it was true or false." It is here shown how wonderfully a man's capacity for divine knowledge is dependent on His inclination. Pascal says, "In order to love human objects it is necessary to know them; in order to know those which are divine, it is necessary to love them." In this sense we see "the law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." *Unless you believe,* says Augustin, *you will not understand.*—Those whose hearts are wrong, never had their minds truly enlightened. The fall has blinded the mind as well as corrupted the heart. Where there

whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

is a hearty aversion to divine truth, it is not received in its right light. It is misunderstood, perverted, rejected. How can an unrenewed man understand the Scripture doctrine about sin, or salvation—when he will not admit and does not see his sin, nor see how he can need such a salvation. Of course he cannot appreciate the plan of grace—nor apprehend the great doctrines of the Gospel. Let one's heart be set right, and let him be intent on pleasing God, and he shall see the fitness and truth of the Scriptures—he will feel their suitableness to himself. OBSERVE—It is the disposition to comply with God's requirements, and not the bare performance of His outward commands which is here spoken of as fundamentally important. 2d. This disposition of heart must go before knowledge, and is in order to it. It prepares us to receive God's revealed truth with humility and docility, without cavil or prejudice or perversion. 3d. We see thus, how essential is true piety to a correct knowledge of the Gospel. No other mind than one savingly illuminated will receive these humbling truths, and the practice of true piety will greatly promote all right understandings of God's revealed will and ways. 4th. We see how it is that poor, unlettered cottagers, who have little knowledge of books, are so clear and well informed in divine things. They have been taught of God. Their views are often far more sublime than ever entered into the mind of worldly statesmen and scholars who despise holy living. 5th. The evidence which true Christians have of the truths of Christianity is most conclusive and satisfactory. They know of the doctrine from their experience in religious duty. They know these truths from having put them to a personal test—and this is a kind of evidence which no arguing of infidels can disturb. It is the evidence of the blind man, (ch. 9.) "One thing I know, that whereas I

18 He<sup>a</sup> that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that

a c. 8. 50.

was blind, now I see." 6th. This is the only kind of evidence that many of the poor of this world have handled—and we ought to bless God that thus he puts his glorious Gospel within the reach of the humblest—and that while these things are hid from the wise and prudent, they are revealed to *babes*. OBSERVE—6th. If any one cannot fully see, let him not wait, but go forward, earnestly seeking to serve God, and the truth shall be made plain to him. "Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord." Hos. 6: 3.

18. Our Lord adds a most clear, convincing test of His doctrine, as different from that of the Jewish doctors. ¶ *Of himself.* Not concerning himself, but by his own authority. Such an one as speaks of his own prompting—self-commissioned—not sent by a higher authority—such an one seeketh to promote his own ends, is self-seeking, and aims at self-exaltation. All His teachings tend to this object. He meant to intimate that this was the character and spirit of the Jewish doctors, and that in this respect, His teachings were widely different from theirs. ¶ *But he, &c.* (Purity of motive is no security for correctness of doctrine. Men may even submit to hardships to establish their doctrine—may even be cast out from the society of their friends, and this will not prove them to be teachers of the truth. Some even love to endure persecutions for their extravagant opinions, and then plead their self-sought persecutions as a proof of their true teaching.) Bengel says, there are two things included in this mark of a true teacher. 1. He is sent. 2. He seeks the glory of Him who sent Him. The stress is to be laid here upon the teacher being sent. Christ is the great apostle, which means "*sent*," and He proved His mission by seeking the glory of the Father: whereas the Jewish doctors had no commission from God, to vouch for their false and selfish teachings.

\* seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses <sup>b</sup> give you the law, and yet none <sup>c</sup> of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill <sup>a</sup> me?

20 The people answered and said,

<sup>a</sup> Pr. 25. 27. <sup>b</sup> Jno. 1. 17. <sup>c</sup> Ga. 3. 19. <sup>c</sup> Ro. 3. 10-19.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. 12. 14. <sup>c</sup> 5. 16, 18,

¶ *No unrighteousness.* One who is not only, not *self-seeking*, but is aiming at the glory of God, must be true, and worthy of confidence, because he seeks only the promotion of *His* honor, who is *truth itself*—and there is no falsity in him, nor can he be a deceiver of the people as some of them alleged. vs. 12.

19. He now charges home upon them, the fact that they had proved their character by their conduct, in regard to the law of Moses. They professedly regarded Moses as the giver of the law—they had no doubt about that, as they professed to have about the authority and mission of our Lord. But what was their real regard for the law of Moses? Their fathers had rejected Moses—and they had no hearty care for doing the will of God as delivered by Moses. This showed plainly that the difficulty was not in their disbelief of our Lord's authority; for, though they pretended to have the highest confidence in Moses, as being sent from God, they paid no proper obedience to the law which he delivered. Therefore He could say to them as He did here in substance, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" ch. 5: 47. The law was to be read before all Israel at the feast of tabernacles every seventh year. ¶ *Why go ye about.* Literally, *Why seek.* Herein they were showing their real temper of enmity against all truth and righteousness. Our Lord Jesus is the sum of all excellence—most worthy to be loved—most suited to engage the warmest affections of all the true and good in the universe. Therefore it is said, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be

\* Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

22 Moses <sup>f</sup> therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but <sup>g</sup> of the fathers;)

<sup>c</sup> c. 8. 48. <sup>f</sup> Le. 12. 3. <sup>g</sup> Ge. 17. 10.

anathema maranatha," because he does thus put himself outside the sphere of all true excellence—and his doom, however dreadful, is only the natural necessary result of his hearty aversion to the essence of all perfection.

20. *The people.* Not the rulers, but the mixed multitude, who were distinguished from the persecuting rulers, and may not have been aware of their foul and murderous designs. From vs. 25, we see that there were such. Yet it would not be strange if even they who were bent on killing Him, had declared themselves innocent, and pretended to be utterly ignorant of any such scheme. They may not yet have known their own hearts—that their hatred was virtually murder. Matt. 5: 21, 22. ¶ *Thou hast a devil—A demon.* Thou art possessed with a spirit of lunacy, and art mad.

21. *One work.* Our Lord drops the direct charge which they so flatly denied—and passes to expose their hatred as exhibited toward Him, in regard to the most beneficent miracle of healing the impotent man at Bethesda. This He speaks of as "*one work*," perhaps in contrast with the multitude of works which they performed on the Sabbath, as He goes on to show. ¶ *Marvel.* Are amazed—a strong term, expressing their great surprise—as if they were *horror struck*. Some connect the "therefore," of the next verse with this, and read, ye all marvel at this. But the received reading is better.

22. *Moses therefore.* They had complained of His work of healing the impotent man, because it was done on the Sabbath, and our Lord proceeds to

and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision,<sup>1</sup> that the law

1 or, without breaking the law of Moses.

condemn them, and justify Himself, on their own principle. 1. He says that Moses gave to them the rite of circumcision—and this, not as though it originated with him, but *because* it came down to him from the fathers, (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,) as a seal of the Abrahamic covenant, *therefore* he gave it to them. Accordingly it was *their custom to circumcise a child on the Sabbath day, whenever* “the eighth day,” prescribed in the law for circumcision, came on the Sabbath. And they did this, *that the law of Moses, in regard to circumcision, might not be broken.*

¶ *Are ye angry.* He asks now how they could be angry at Him, (not for *circumcising*, but what is much greater and better,) for *curing* a man—making an impotent man, *entirely whole* on the Sabbath day. They performed circumcision, *that the law of Moses should not be broken.* Levit. 12: 3. But the ordinance of circumcision was really of prior and higher authority than Moses, as having come down from the patriarchs. And yet, even in this view, the law of love and mercy which He followed in this healing act, was of still prior and higher authority, as having been from the very beginning, and, like Christ Himself, *before Abraham.* If then, they, in order to keep the law of Moses, were accustomed on the Sabbath to perform the rite of circumcision, with so many works belonging to it, of washing, bandaging, healing, &c., how could they consistently complain of Him—nay, be so enraged at Him, because He, on the Sabbath, did a work that was of earlier and more urgent obligation—a work of necessity and mercy? Our Lord here shows that if to keep a Mosaic law, they thought it right to do this work of circumcising a man, (a male child) on the Sabbath, He could plead a law older than Moses, or the patriarchs

of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because <sup>a</sup> I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?

a John 5. 8.

even, for His work—the original fundamental law of God, the law of love and mercy. Matt. 9: 13. OBSERVE.—If our Lord had held that the Sabbath law was no longer binding, He would certainly have said, you can do either or any work on the Sabbath, because the fourth commandment is no longer in force. But His object was here, (as elsewhere often,) to correct their false views of the Sabbath, and to show that works of necessity and mercy could be done on that day. So He taught them, in the case of others. They had superstitious ideas of the day and perverted the commandment. The seventh day of the week, was still *the Sabbath*, till the resurrection of our Lord on “the first day of the week,” consecrated another day, as “the Lord’s Day.” Rev. 1: 10. This came gradually to be held as *superseeding the other, along with the institutions of the old economy.* 2. In circumcising according to the Mosaic law, they did right, and in healing according to the original law of love, He did right. Neither of these was a violation of the Sabbath. “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” 3. If our Lord had held the Sabbath to be a mere ceremonial institution, He would have said, “ye allow one ceremonial institution to be set aside by another.” You circumcise, to keep the law of Moses. But the Sabbath also is such.—But He speaks of the Sabbath law as evidently something different, and resting on distinct grounds. And the simple question was, whether His act of healing was any more inconsistent with the true spirit of the Sabbath as an original, fundamental law, than their work of circumcision. He would show them, that according to the proper idea of the Sabbath, both were allowable. Besides, circumcision was appointed to



24 Judge <sup>a</sup> not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly,

<sup>a</sup> De. 1. 16. 17.

be done on "*the eighth day.*" And as the seventh day was the Sabbath of the week; it came to denote the sacred portion of time; and so "*the eighth day,*" (which followed it,) carried with it a foreshadowing of the new, Christian Sabbath, which should supersede the Jewish Sabbath and its ritual ordinances. ch. 7: 37, notes. ¶ *Every whit whole.* Literally—*The whole man healed.* Circumcision related to the outside merely. But this healing restored the *whole man*. It was not superficial and ceremonial, but it gave soundness to the entire person. Some take it to refer to soul and body. But we are not sure that this man was renewed. vs. 14.

24. *According to the appearance.* He had set forth this act of healing as not in violation of the Sabbath, according to the true spirit of that institution, and of His own act. He meant by this to turn their attention to the internal motive of His conduct, and to urge upon them a spiritual view of the whole matter. At first appearance, it might seem that their circumcising or His healing was in violation of the Sabbath. But carefully, justly considered in their proper spirit, and according to righteous judgment, the case would be clear—and His act would prove justifiable no less than their work. ¶ *Righteous judgment.* Literally, *The righteous judgment*—that which alone is righteous, and true, according to the inner principle, and not swayed by the outward appearance.

25. *Of Jerusalem.* Literally, *Some of the Jerusalemites.* These seem to be citizens of Jerusalem who were well disposed, and different from "the people" mentioned in verse 20. They

and they say nothing unto him. Do <sup>b</sup> the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

27 Howbeit <sup>c</sup> we know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

<sup>b</sup> ver. 48. <sup>c</sup> Matt. 13. 55.

speak here as *lookers-on*, who knew of the hatred of the Sanhedrim there, and were curious to observe the turn which things would take. They were surprised at the *boldness* with which Jesus defended Himself, and at the way in which He *was allowed* to proceed—as though, perhaps, *the rulers* had come to some change in their views.

26. *Do the rulers know indeed.* The rulers were the *Sanhedrim*, who, as was well known in Jerusalem, had sought to take the life of Jesus. It was therefore to be expected from the public inquiries made by them about His presence at the feast, that when He should appear they would lose no time in seizing Him. But their quietness, and their allowance of His open, bold discourse and defence, made these *people* of Jerusalem query whether the *rulers* had indeed become possibly convinced of His Messiahship. It was their business to search into it. The people themselves were probably quite ready to believe in Him—His words moved them to conviction. ¶ *Indeed—Truly.* Have they ascertained of a truth? See vs. 48.

27. *Howbeit.* They are willing to take human authority in rejecting Christ, but not in acknowledging Him? They are not ready to believe and adopt the consequences of it, even if the rulers have so done. They easily find some flaw in the evidence, just where they would be pressed to the point of giving in their adherence to Him. There is a "*but*" in the matter. ¶ *We know this man, &c.* This was their flimsy and false reasoning. "We are given to understand in the Scripture, that no one will know whence the Messiah originates, and where He is born. But

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and <sup>a</sup> I am not come of my-

*a* c. 5. 43.

it is well known that Jesus was born at Bethlehem—therefore He can not be the true Messiah.” But plainly enough their own Scriptures declared that Christ was to come out of Bethlehem. It was some false notion of their teachers, therefore, or some false construction of theirs, on which this mistake rested. It may have come from the idea which is met with in the Scriptures, that when the Messiah should come, no one would know His eternal, heavenly origin as the Son of God. Is. 53: 8; Micah 5: 2. And this they may have so misunderstood as to refer it to His earthly birthplace. Even His tribe, family and lineage, as well as His birthplace, were distinctly pointed out in their Scriptures. Or it may have been their misapprehension of Daniel 7: 13, where the Messiah is represented as coming *with the clouds of heaven*. Some of the Jews thought that the Messiah would not be known until He should be anointed by Elias, when He would suddenly come forth from obscurity, while others held that He would appear and then be hid, as Moses was. OBSERVE—It is plain that this was only a subterfuge to which they were driven by their rising convictions. Just such foolish, unreasonable pretences does the carnal heart always find to resist the truth. “It belongs to God to give the true understanding of His own Scriptures, and otherwise human reason does but make every thing in them intricate. It often happens that men think themselves very knowing in the Scriptures, and in the ways of God, when they really are as blind in respect of them as these very Jews.”—*Quesnel*.

28. *As He taught, saying*—Teaching and saying. Our Lord here takes them at their word; and shows with great pointedness and severity, that while they do, indeed, know of His earthly

self, but he that sent me<sup>b</sup> is true, whom <sup>c</sup> ye know not.

29 But <sup>d</sup> I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

*b* Ro. 3. 4. *c* c. 1. 18; 8. 55. *d* Matt. 11. 27. c. 10. 15.

origin, they do not at all know whence He originally has come, nor Him from whom He came. They knew that He was from Nazareth, as the place at least “where He was brought up,” and that His family was that of Joseph and Mary. But this was all they knew. And so, in reality, the conditions which they claimed for the Messiah were fulfilled in Him—namely, that they did not know whence He was. ¶ *And I am not*. Rather—And yet I am not, &c. ¶ *But*. Rather—And moreover—besides this. ¶ *True*. This is not the common word for “true.” It means rather, *genuine, real, original*, as distinct from the image or representation. It is the term used in the fifteenth chapter—“I am the *true vine*.” See Notes. It is not in the sense of being *worthy of belief*, but as being a substantial and veritable person, who has in Himself all the perfection that is expressed in the image or type. Christ was the reflection and image, or stamp of the Father, (Heb. 1: 3,) and the Father was the genuine essence, answering to all that He represented and showed forth. Besides this, the Father was *true*, as distinct from their merely shadowy and partial views of Him. ¶ *Whom ye know not*. They claimed to know the Jehovah of their Old Testament Scriptures. But our Lord shows that they did not know Him, and in this sense, indeed, they did not know whence He came, just because they did not know Him as the Father of the Son. No one who denied Him as the Messiah could know the Father as Jehovah—for he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who sent Him. Ch. 5: 23. And the same could be said of the present case, He that *knoweth* not the Son *knoweth* not the Father who sent Him.

29. *I know Him*. This clause further sets forth the close relation to the

30 Then <sup>a</sup> they sought to take him but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many <sup>b</sup> of the people

<sup>a</sup> Mar. 11. 18. Lu. 20. 19. c. 8. 37. <sup>b</sup> c. 4. 39.

Father which Jesus claimed. He was in a position such as gave Him a peculiar knowledge of the Father. He was in the bosom of the Father—and the only-begotten son of the Father—and, therefore, He could reveal Him, because He most immediately knew Him. ch. 1: 18. Therefore, also, they did not know Him, because they had no intimate relation to Him as children, and this was shown in their rejection of His Son whom He had sent. ¶ *From Him.* This denotes the eternal Sonship from which follows His mission.

30. *They sought.* That is, the rulers—the Sanhedrim, as distinct from the people. This was because of His bold reproof and plain declarations against them. ¶ *But no man.* It is wonderful that with all their zeal for His destruction, no man laid hands on Him. There were doubtless some sufficient reasons for their keeping back—perhaps from the fear of the people who differed, as we have seen, from the rulers, in their judgment of Him, and their feelings toward Him. vs. 25, 26 and 31. But the Evangelist gives only the reason back of all, and behind all second causes, viz: that *His hour*, appointed by the Father, had not yet come. ch. 17: 1.

31. *And many.* Rather—but many. This gives us some hint of the difficulties which the rulers had in carrying out their bloody designs. Many of the people who did not share in the selfish opposition of the Sanhedrim, were really believing on Him, at least, in His prophetic character, if not as Messiah, and the rulers saw that they would have the people against them if they made any attempt upon His life. OBSERVE—1. Our Lord's divine mission was proved by this continual miracle of His preservation amidst the malice of His enemies; and He was plainly apprized of the time and man-

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believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

ner of His end, as appointed by the Father. ch. 17: 1. “I am immortal,” said Whitfield, “till my work is done.” 2. There was, nevertheless, a natural connexion of events leading to that great hour—and John gives us the narrative of how it came to pass—and gives it no less carefully or minutely because he saw it to have been divinely appointed. ¶ *Of the people.* As distinct from the rulers. See vs. 48. These comprised also strangers who were visitors at the festival from different quarters, as distinct from the Jerusalemites, who were residents of the city. vs. 25. ¶ *And said.* They were able to give a reason of the hope that was in them. ¶ *When Christ cometh.* That is—according to the Scriptures, which predict Christ's coming, are we authorized to expect more. ¶ *More miracles?* This was a good reason for believing in Jesus. They were given to expect from their Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah, when he came, would work miracles. Isa. 35: 5, 6, &c. And now it was a fair question for his persecutors to answer, whether more miracles could be expected to be wrought by any other than had been wrought by this Jesus. OBSERVE—1. All the learning and subtilty of the Jewish doctors does not come up to this plain and conclusive argument of the common people. Miracles are promised to be wrought by Christ to show the divine witness to His mission, when He comes. This man has wrought many miracles without doubt. Does the Scripture say that “when Christ cometh,” He shall work more miracles than these. 2. The plain common sense argument of the humble cottager, which brings forward the Scriptures, is confounding to all the fine-spun sophistries of philosophers and men of science, falsely so called. “I thank thee, O Father,” &c. (Matt. 11: 25.) 3.

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them,

How often infidelity in its zeal, has the effect under God to bring out humble faith, to a more bold and forcible expression. How many of the able defences of Christianity have been called out by the denial of vital truths. And so it is that God overrules the workings of evil, and controls all things to the furtherance of His cause. Things seemed all the while now to be getting worse and worse. But God was gathering His elect people in the midst of vilest, bitterest oppositions of those in power, and He would bring even out of the death of His Son, the light and life of the world.

32. *Murmured.* This term means to *whisper*—to talk over in a low tone. This was the way probably in which the people were expressing themselves in groups, or discussing the matter in private parties. They who fear the Lord will speak often one to another, even in the worst times, (Mal. 3: 16,) and the Lord hearkens and hears them, as well as the bitter persecutors. It is not said that the Pharisees *heard them*—but that they *heard of them*. It was reported to them that the people were so talking among themselves. Nor is it said that the people were seeking concealment. But the popular excitement in His favor, brought the masses to such earnest conference wherever they met. The Pharisees and chief priests are both mentioned here, as the Sanhedrim was made up of these. ¶ *Sent officers.* This demonstration of the people's faith, was an alarming symptom in the view of the Pharisees. They therefore, sent at once their officers—not to seize Him immediately, but to stand ready for a convenient moment.

33. Our Lord here continues the discourse which was interrupted, vs. 29.

Yet <sup>a</sup> a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye <sup>b</sup> shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

a c. 13. 33; 16. 16. b Hos. 5. 6. c. 8. 21.

And He continues with a reference to what He perfectly knew of all their secret plots against Him. He seems to refer to the movement they were making to lay hands on Him—whether there was anything open in it, or not, is not said. He signifies to them, that the time for His death was rapidly approaching, and that therefore they need not be so impatient to seize Him. ¶ *Him that sent me.* This implied that He would soon ascend to the Father. And it would seem that they would have understood it so, as He had just been speaking of being sent by the Father. vs. 29. And yet they most grossly misunderstand it, or willfully pervert the meaning in ridicule. vs. 35. It was a dark saying to them, as they did not know Him who sent Him. vs. 28.

34. *Ye shall seek Me.* Some take this to refer to their seeking Him, to kill Him. But it probably has the sense of seeking the Messiah, whom they had despised in Himself. “The time shall come, (at my death,) when the Messiah, whom you have rejected in my person, you shall then seek in vain.” And even while the judgments would be hanging over the Holy City, they would ask, (many of them,) whether this Jesus whom they had crucified, might not possibly have been the promised Messiah. ¶ *Shall not find me.* You shall not find the Messiah, for I am the true and only Messiah, and having put me to death, you shall seek for another in vain. Nay, though you may be driven by your calamities and self-reproaches to wish me back again, you shall not find me. ¶ *Where I am.* He was “the Son of Man which is in Heaven,” (ch. 3: 13,) and the words, “*where I am*”—which some have taken to be rather, “*where I go*,” are meant to

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will

convey the same idea as in ch. 3: 13, and to signify that such was His wondrous nature, that even while He was on earth, He was also in heaven. My bodily presence shall be withdrawn from you. I shall be safely at rest, where ye cannot come. He means to say that all their violence cannot seriously harm Him—much less put Him out of existence—that He shall be in a better place, where they might be glad to be, and where they could not follow Him in the flesh, and where, in their present unbelieving state, they were not able to come. Prov. 1: 28.

¶ *Cannot come.* Literally, *ye are not able to come.* He says, “where I am,” rather than “*where I shall be*,” to signify the *essential truth*, as applicable to their condition at that moment, in their unbelief, and to show the infinite distance at which they then already were—only that they had not yet waked up to see it in any way, and when, in their coming calamity they should, as a nation, seek for Him, that is, for the Messiah, they should not find Him—and more than this, where He then was, and would be, they as they then were, would not be able to come. So in ch. 8: 21, He says more severely, ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins. “For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” ch. 8: 21, 22. OBSERVE.—This declaration of our Lord is the *text* upon which He discourses to them in the following chapter, and in ch. 16: 16. Our Lord, therefore, as much as said: “Unwise men, ye know not what ye do in rejecting me, your Deliverer! Soon enough will your foolish desire to see me removed from you, be fulfilled. I shall remain with you only a short time, and then return to my heavenly Father.” You shall be in the dark about my abode, and thus rejecting me now, you shall find the fruits of your unbelief settling upon you in judicial blindness, and ye shall die in

he go unto the dispersed \* among the<sup>1</sup> Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

a Is. 11. 12. Ja. 1. 1. 1 Pe. 1. 1. 1 or, *Greeks.*

your sins, by cherishing and continuing in your unbelief. How sadly is this threatening fulfilled in their descendants ever since the time of Christ. The Jews as a nation, still groping along in the dark and looking for the Messiah, do not find Him, and many give up to despair and utter infidelity, because they reject Jesus Christ. OBSERVE.—How often the *cavils which men indulge in, settle upon them*, so that they cannot shake them off when they wish to. All the objections and sophistries which they have resorted to, in order to quiet their consciences in unbelief, will, by the very laws of their own minds, so fix upon them and fasten them down in their sins, that they cannot get rid of them, even, when in the solemnities of a dying hour, they would fain believe. They who spend their lives in finding fault with church members, and with ministers, and cultivating a spirit of objection to the truth—will find that though Christ is gracious as ever, they have been weaving a winding sheet for their souls—forging a chain for their eternal imprisonment. They cannot escape from the net which they have thrown around themselves. “Because I called, and ye refused,” &c. Prov. 1: 24–26.

35. The Jews either understand Him to speak of going to some other country—or they mean to turn His words to ridicule, and pervert their proper sense. They ask, therefore, if He will go among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles? Will He leave Palestine, where He has met so much opposition, and out of despite will He turn to the Gentiles whom the Jews so much hate, and teach the Gentiles? “The dispersed,” being mentioned here, may mean those Jewish congregations who were scattered abroad in Gentile lands, from whom He might operate upon the Greeks.” The meaning is, will He leave Palestine and go into the countries of the Gentiles, (Greeks,) among

36 What *manner of* saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

whom our brethren are dispersed. Will He even teach and proselyte the Gentiles? Then, indeed, we shall not follow Him. This is evidently spoken in ridicule. Our Lord returns no answer to these cavils. ¶ *Gentiles.* Those who were not Jews were called Greeks, (*Gentiles*,) because those foreigners whom the Jews knew of, were chiefly such as spoke the Greek tongue. The term here rendered “Gentiles,” is, literally, “Greeks,” viz—the aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel—the Gentiles. OBSERVE—This is precisely what Christ has done—and for this very reason, viz—His going to the Gentiles, the Jews yet at this day reject Him, and die in their sins without a Saviour.

36. *What manner.* Literally—*what is this word*, &c. They mean to say (*lightly*,) that it is a dark saying—that they cannot see what it means unless it be what they have just said, or something of the kind.

37. *In the last day*, &c. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was the closing feast day of the year. Some take this to have been on the seventh day, understanding that the proper term of the feast was seven days. Levit. 23: 34-36; compare Neh. 8: 18; Numb. 29: 35. But we find that the first day was to be a solemn assembly and feast Sabbath—and on the eighth day, another solemn assembly and feast Sabbath. It was doubtless this eighth and closing day—that was called *the great*, the crowning day of the feast. We find *the eighth day* thus signalized also in the Passover feast. The day after the Paschal Sabbath was made great by the waving of “the first fruits.” And all along, there was a pointing forward in the festivals of the Old economy to the *great festal day* of the New Testament, when Christ, “the

37 In the last <sup>a</sup> day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If <sup>b</sup> any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

<sup>a</sup> Le. 23. 36. <sup>b</sup> Is. 55. 1. Re. 22. 17.

first fruits,” was presented in His Resurrection—the EIGHTH DAY—which is the *first day* of the week, and not the *last*, the day when the Fountain is opened, and when living waters flow forth from the Temple at Jerusalem. Ezek. 47: 1-12; Zech. 14: 8. This *eighth day* was celebrated with special pomp and splendor. There was a universal jubilee among the people, and the Rabbins were accustomed to say, “Whoever has not witnessed these festivities has no idea of a Jubilee.” This day was a day of rest from servile labor—a holy day—a Sabbath—and so it did very plainly shadow forth the glorious Sabbath of the New Testament. This was properly enough the *preaching-day* of our Lord, when, in terms so remarkably clear and direct, He begins to set forth the Gospel provisions, more fully than to the woman of Samaria. ch. 4. It was remarkable about this feast, that the animal sacrifices offered were diminished each successive day, until the last day, when but ONE was offered—pointing plainly to the vanishing away of those sacrifices, and to the ONE only sacrifice, “the Lamb of God.” Besides, that to which our Lord here especially alludes, is the ceremony in which every day, at the morning sacrifice, the priest brought from the Fountain of Siloam, which sprang up in the interior of the Temple mountain, and flowed under the shadow of the Temple, a golden vessel full of the water, and mingling it with sacrificial wine, poured it out upon the altars, and amidst the sounding of trumpets and cymbals they sang the words of Isaiah, 12: 3, “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” The *Hallel* was then sung. Ps. 113-118. Some allege that this ceremony was not performed on the eighth day. (There is evidence that

38 He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out<sup>a</sup> of

a Pr. 18. 4. Is. 58. 11. c. 4. 14.

it was done on each day of the feast.) But if not, this would not make it inappropriate for our Lord to refer to the ceremony of the preceding seven days. He refers to the water here as a symbol of Himself, or of His gospel grace, just as He does in the next chapter, to the illumination at this feast, when He speaks of Himself as "*the Light of the world.*" The later Rabbins call this festivity "*The Joy of the Law,*" because the water was a symbol of Divine grace. They supposed the passage in Isaiah to refer to Messianic times, and translated it, "*With joy shall you receive the new doctrine from the chosen ones of righteousness.*" Our Lord connects His gospel teaching with their ceremonies, to show how fully the doctrine which He brought answered to all the shadows of their services, and best realized all the expectations which their ritual properly called forth. He tells them, therefore, that He was Himself the Great Reality of what they rejoiced in under that figure. That He was "*the living water*"—"the water of Life"—"*the Fountain opened.*" ¶ *Stood and cried.* He was accustomed to teach sitting. Matt. 5: 1. Now, however, on the last day of the last feast which He should attend prior to the Passover in which He was to be the victim, Wisdom stood and cried standing in the chief place of concourse. Prov. 1: 20-23. ¶ *If any man.* Whoever he be—Jew or Gentile—bond or free. ¶ *Thirst.* This sense of thirst is used to express that intense uneasiness and longing for supply and satisfaction which the soul often feels. They were familiar with these terms of invitation in the Old Testament Scriptures—"Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Is. 55: 1. And this was meant to announce Himself as the one pointed to by Isaiah—as the "*fountain opened,*" (Zach. 13: 1,) and this invitation as that which the prophets had in view. It is not intended to limit

his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

His gospel offer to those who shall be able to prove that they have just this intensity of desire, called *thirst*. It is not meant to say that only those whose desire for salvation is so deep and anxious as to answer to the idea of *thirst*, can be allowed to come to Him. It is an invitation—not a restriction. It is meant to invite most broadly all who will—not to limit the offer. The emphasis, therefore, is rather upon the words "*any man*" and *ME*, than upon the word "*thirst.*" For *thirst* is taken as that intense longing for some supply to fill the soul, which all men have in some shape—and to all, therefore, the Saviour would make known that He alone can meet the desire, and satisfy the need. As though He had said—

"Ho! ye who pant for living streams,  
And pine away and die;  
Here you may quench your raging thirst  
With springs that never dry."

38. Faith is here set forth as the great requisite. ¶ *As the Scripture, &c.* The reference is to the promise of living water flowing from the believer: and the difficulty is, that a promise in such terms is not to be found. But we understand Him to refer to the Scripture as somewhere substantially conveying this idea. And we find it in the very connexion of this ceremony, where, in Ezek. 47: 1-12, and in Zech. 14: 8, living water is spoken of as flowing forth from Jerusalem and from the temple. Now the temple was the sacred residence or seat of God on earth. But God, by His Spirit, should dwell among men, and in them, when Christ should ascend on High and receive gifts for them. Ephes. 4: 8; Ps. 68: 18. Therefore, the Christian is spoken of by the apostle as the temple of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. 6: 19. Hence, as "*living waters*" of spiritual influence should go forth from the Christian church, as the temple of God and the New Jerusalem—so also should they

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the

α Is. 44 3. Joel 2. 28. c. 16. 7. Ac. 2. 17, 33.

flow forth from each believer. And this should be, when God by His Spirit should dwell among men, (Ps. 68: 18,)—"tabernacle with men"—and dwell in the believer as His temple. Gal. 4: 6; 1 Cor. 3: 16. The next verse shows this to be the true explanation—as it refers to the fact that the ascension of Christ to receive gifts for men, was the condition upon which the Holy Ghost was to be given.

39. *This spake He.* This is the explanation thrown in by the Evangelist to show that the gift of the Spirit and His indwelling in each believer, is what our Lord spake of in the general reference to the Scripture promise in vs. 38. Accordingly we find that the apostle understands the Old Testament promise (Ps. 68: 18,) in the same sense: for where he refers to it in Ephes. 4: 8, he goes on to speak of the various gifts—"some apostles and some prophets and some pastors and teachers"—all of which are to flow forth—"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ." Ephes. 4: 11, 12. Therefore, the explanation of the Evangelist is as much as to say, that our Lord did not mean to quote in the very terms, any promise of the Old Testament, yet He spake these words in reference to the Spirit which believers should (according to the promises,) receive, that is, after His own ascension. ¶ *For.* The reason is an important one, as has been already shown. The Spirit's more special effusion and ministration was made to depend on Christ's ascension. ¶ *Not yet.* The word "*given*" is not necessary to be supplied. "*The Spirit was not,*" simply means that it was not yet the season of the Spirit's dispensation—just as it is written in Mark 11: 13, "*the time of figs was not.*" The Spirit had not come in, as the *other Comforter*,

Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

promised. Ch. 14: 16; 15: 26; 16: 7. The event of Christ's ascension was signalized by the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, (Acts 2: 33,) which was a token of what was to be expected in the church, and a fulfillment in part of the prophecy in Joel 3: 1; Ezekiel 36: 25; 39: 29, and Zachariah 12: 1; Isaiah 32: 15; 39: 29. Of course it is not intended to say that the Spirit was not at all imparted—nor at all working in believers and the church—for it wrought in the prophets and all saints from pious Abel, (Heb. 11,) and not a soul ever believed in Christ, or wrought righteousness without the Spirit—for *faith* is one of the *fruits* of the Spirit. Gal. 5: 22. ¶ *Glorified.* It is John's object to set forth the glorious dignity of Christ and of His work, and he shows all the events as steadily tending to Christ's glorification. See introduction. His death was even to lead to His being glorified, as he should thus be exalted to the right hand of power on the Mediator's throne. The Psalm already quoted, (68: 18,) contemplates Him as having ascended on high, and having led captivity captive, and having *received gifts* for men—while the apostle Paul (Eph. 4: 8,) has it "*He gave gifts to men*"—because He *received* the gifts in order to *give* them—and while the Psalmist contemplates Him as *receiving* them, the Apostle contemplates him as *bestowing* them, distributing them graciously, in the church. Believers did not *receive* them in their full measure until He should ascend on high, and *receive* them to *give them out* according to the promise and the plan of redemption. OBSERVE—1. These gifts of the Spirit are said to be "*according to the measure of the gift of Christ,*" (Eph. 4: 7,) as they are all of grace. And yet we are to exercise them according to the proportion (measure) of faith. Rom. 11: 6. As Augustine has said, "Each is filled



40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. <sup>a</sup>

a De. 18. 15, 18. c. 6. 14.

according to the size of that vessel of faith which each brings to the fountain. If the love of the world dwelleth in thee, there is no room in thee for the love of God. Pour out what thou hast, that thou mayest receive what thou hast not. Each according to his thirst shall find drink in God." 2. We pray for Christ's *ascension gifts*. They are gifts of grace to us—but gifts of merit to Him. He has earned them by His finished work. Hence, it was *when He ascended* to Heaven, having triumphed over the grave and death and hell, and having finished what was given Him to do, that He received these gifts for men (His people,) as the reward of His atoning work. Hence, He said to His disciples on the very eve of His crucifixion, "If I depart, (to Heaven,) I will send Him (the Comforter, the Holy Ghost,) unto you. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." ch. 15: 7. 3. "The glorified body of the Lord is the temple from under whose threshold the Holy Spirit flows forth to us." See ch. 1: 16; Rom. 8: 11; Col. 2: 9. 4. Christ has now ascended. He is glorified and sitteth at the right hand to shed forth freely the gifts of the Spirit. "Ask and ye shall receive. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely." The river of water of life, clear as crystal, is revealed to us as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Rev. 22: 1.—5. The Gospel provisions are represented by water, (1) in their *suitableness*—suited to every man as water is suited to his thirst; (2) in their *fullness*—full as the running fountain which he cannot possibly exhaust; and (3) in their *freeness*—free as the gushing spring at the roadside for every thirsting traveler. 6. As this living water is a *well-spring* in each believer, springing up to everlasting life, (ch. 4: 14,) and as it is a *flowing stream*, which is to *flow forth*

41 Others said, This is the <sup>b</sup> Christ. But some said, Shall <sup>c</sup> Christ come out of Galilee?

b c. 4. 42; 6. 69. c c. 1. 46. ver. 52.

from every Christian bosom, as truly as it flows forth from the original source to him, so our graces, if we have them, must be *DIFFUSIVE*. Therefore, divine grace in the heart is represented as *light*: and it is the very property of light to *shine*. It is not light unless it shines. "As every one hath received the gift so let him minister." 1 Pet. 4: 10. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7: 20. If each believer were a flowing spring of Christian influence, how soon the knowledge of God would cover the earth as the waters fill the sea.

40. *Many*. There was a division among them, (as there always will be,) some approving, some rejecting. So it was, all along, (vs. 12,) and *many* were inclining to Him. vs. 31. Here also we find the impression wrought by His sweet and tender invitation—His bold defence—His earnest manner, (as He *stood*, that all might see, and *cried* that all might hear,) and especially by the secret working of that Divine Spirit, which as yet was only partially dispensed. ¶ *The Prophet*. That is, the Prophet who was predicted as to come, (Deut. 18: 15—18,) the prophet like unto Moses—of whom some thought one thing and some another. See ch. 1: 21; Matt. 16: 14; ch. 6: 14; 4: 19. The impression made upon the people, of His being the great prophet who was to come, is expressed in the language of conviction, "Of a truth"—really—certainly this is He. It is as in the case of the centurion. Matt. 27: 54. So Matt. 14: 33; ch. 4: 42; 6: 14; 7: 26.

41. *The Christ*. Some of the Jews held that the prophet who was to come, was different from the Messiah, and was to herald His coming. Others held that he was the same with Christ. Here they seem to be distinguished. Some took Jesus for the prophet, and others for the Christ Himself. See ch. 1: 20 ¶ *But some said*. These ob-

42 Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ <sup>a</sup> cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, <sup>b</sup> where David <sup>c</sup> was.

43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 132: 11. Je. 23: 5. <sup>b</sup> Mt. 5: 2. Lu. 2: 4. <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 16: 1, 5.

jectors were always ready, ever stifling by the scripture itself the yearnings of faith. A true sample this, of the world's wisdom in things spiritual. Knowing so much, yet knowing so little—ready enough to bring forward difficulties and pick flaws, but not at all ready with the proper explanations, even when they are plain to a child. ¶ *Out of Galilee.* This was a sheer perversion of the facts, as contrary to the scripture which they professed to know all about. The facts were in exact and wonderful harmony with the scripture. The hint of His connexion with Galilee, was given in Isaiah 9: 1, 2. (Comp. Matt. 4: 15.) while it was not true that Christ came out of Galilee, in the sense of His being born there. OBSERVE.—How often the carnal heart in its prejudice against the truth, is ready to distort the facts, and to quote Scripture to sustain errors—when if the facts could only be known, and the truth thoroughly sifted, scripture would never contradict the reality. All the facts in nature—as in Geology, Astronomy, &c., are sometimes very boldly brought forward as contradictory to the Scripture, when if the two books of God's revelation—in Nature and in the Inspired word—were understood, they would be found most exactly to agree. Our Lord was brought up in Nazareth of Galilee, but He came out of Bethlehem—that is, was *born there*. 2. How often men who seem very zealous for the Scripture, use it against Christ and against the truth as it is in Jesus.

42. *The Scripture.* So many events had occurred since our Lord's birth—and that was so strangely away from His home, at Bethlehem, where the parents were on a passing visit for the taxing—and He was so short a time at

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

Bethlehem, before the flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth, that it is not strange if He seemed to the people, to have been born at Nazareth, rather than at Bethlehem. Joseph does not seem to have been generally known, as "of the house and lineage of David." But it was well understood among the people from the prophecies of the Old Testament, that Christ was to be of royal descent, and was to be born at Bethlehem. 2 Sam. 7: 12; Jer. 23: 5, 6; 33: 15, 16; Ps. 132: 11; Micah 5: 2.

43. *A division.* Literally, *a schism*. There were two parties, and now they began to take positive sides, so as to form two bodies; the supporters and the persecutors of our Lord. So it came to pass, according to His own prediction, that He came to bring a sword instead of peace. (Luke 12: 51: 1 Cor. 14: 33;) not as though this was the aim or the proper effect of His mission, but because of the perverseness of men, by which a man's foes should be they of his own household. Matt. 10: 36.

44. Some of His opposers had it in their hearts to seize Him, as we have before found in vs. 30. It is not for lack of the disposition, that they keep hands off of Him. They are still held in check by a Divine power, because His hour for suffering death had not yet come, as is stated already in vs. 30. There were not wanting many from the multitude attending at the feast, who were ready to serve the chief priests and Pharisees. And as they had officers out, commissioned to take Him, so they were careful to have also enough of the crowd in their cruel interest.

45. *The officers.* These were probably

46 The officers answered, Never  
 a man spake like this man.

47 Then answered them the  
 Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

a Luke 4. 22.

the same as are spoken of in vs. 32, as having been sent by the Sanhedrim to take Him, or to stand prepared at least, and watch their opportunity. They had already been on the watch during this public excitement, and had probably heard His discourse at the close of the Feast of Tabernacles. vs. 37. This discourse had impressed many of the people. vs. 40. And we find that even these officers were deeply moved. ¶ *Why*. It is not unlikely that the Sanhedrim were in council, informally, at least, and awaiting some report from the officers. They seem to have expected the arrest to be made, and to have been disappointed that He was not brought to them—at least that the officers returned without Him.

46. *Never man*. They do not say it was for lack of opportunity or of sufficient force to take Him, or for fear of the people—but simply that His wonderful discourse had held them back. It was doubtless his august manner—showing something of His divinity—that moved them, even though they may not have quite appreciated His doctrine. Matt. 7: 29. Yet the tender invitations which He gave, coupled with His earnest and convincing defence, appealed to the conscience of these men, and they could not resist. Even Stephen's discourse had such irresistible power with the conscience. Acts 7: —. We see that these officers choose rather to meet the frown of the Sanhedrim than to lay violent hands on such an one as He. How could they seize one as a criminal from whose lips such words of love and pity flowed? They come back to the Sanhedrim, preaching Christ. Augustine says, "*He whose life was lightning, had words of thunder!*"

47. *Are ye also*. In vs. 12, we find Jesus charged with *deceiving* the people. The cutting question now put to these

48 Have any of the rulers<sup>b</sup> or  
 of the Pharisees believed on him?

49 But this people, who knoweth  
 not the law, are cursed.

b Je. 5. 4, 5. c. 12. 42. 1 Cor. 1. 26.

officers is, Are you also allowing yourselves to be cheated by this impostor? Are you giving heed to His claims, and believing blindly in His pretensions?

48. The favorable report of the officers is further rebuked by the question, whether they had any authority for believing in Jesus from the example of any of the Sanhedrim. As much as to say, Wait till some of *us* have believed, who are the proper leaders of the public sentiment, and who have a right to know whether He is true or false.—It is not unlikely also that they began to fear lest this strange report of their officers might have had some such ground as this, and lest some "ruler" or Pharisee had indeed believed. Jairus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus were rulers, and believers: and in ch. 12 it is recorded that "among the chief rulers many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Ch. 12: 42.

49. *But this people*. This common people—this crowd—this rabble—as distinct from the rulers, &c. The language is that of vexation and contempt. They accuse the populace of being an ignorant mob, who had no right to have any opinion, at least none of their own, and none different from that of these learned and official men. And so they pronounced them *cursed*—not in any formal sentence of the court—for it was spoken rather in scorn of the crowd, with whom these officers were supposed to sympathize. It will be remembered that it was on account of some manifestation of favor toward Him on the part of the multitude, that they had sent these officers to take Him, vs. 31, 32. OBSERVE—1. The testimony of the people, and of these officers, to our Lord's wonderful discourse. What must have been

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (<sup>a</sup> he that came <sup>1</sup> to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51 Doth <sup>b</sup> our law judge *any*

*a c. 3. 2. 1 to him. b De. 17. 8. Pr. 18. 13.*

the aspect, tone, manner and doctrine of the Saviour, to send these men back with such a report, when they were sent to seize Him—and sent by the highest in church authority. Doubtless, however, it was the unseen and powerful working of the Holy Spirit through the natural conscience which held them in check. 2. How often those who have gone to the sanctuary to lay violent hands on the minister of the gospel, have been powerless, and have returned converted. 3. The chief priests of a superstitious and corrupt hierarchy, as the popes, and archbishops of the papacy, have often “sent officers” of the State to seize and murder the servants of Christ. They are as intent upon it now as ever—and nothing keeps them in check, where they have the power, except it be the Divine arm, for the time.

50. After this question of the Sanhedrim to the officers, (vs. 48,) how startled they must have been to hear one of their own body speak out, who hitherto had been only a secret believer. ch. 3: 1. &c. Inasmuch as they accused the people of not *knowing the law*, so as to judge of Christ's pretensions, Nicodemus takes up the charge, and puts it home to them. He reminds them of the law of Moses, that no one was to be condemned, unheard. Exod. 23: 1; Deut. 1: 16, 17, 19, 15. The Sanhedrim were likely in session, and had intended at heart to condemn Jesus at once, as soon as the officers should bring Him. It would seem that the Sanhedrim had sent the officers, (vs. 32,) for “the Pharisees and chief priests” are they—and it was against such hasty, informal, and illegal procedure, that Nicodemus' question is directed. Hence it turns out, that these sticklers for the law, are the very men who are breaking the law. And so it was throughout. They

man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee?

were very jealous of the Sabbath—so much so, that they would have the bones of Jesus broken on the cross and a hasty end put to His life, lest the Sabbath hours should be encroached upon! Ch. 19: 31. What hypocrisy is not the human heart capable of! OBSERVE.—It is a bad sign when men are very particular about the external of religion—the mode of public worship, form, &c., and perfectly regardless of justice and right, as between man and man. This was our Lord's denunciation against these very men—“tithing mint, and anise, and cummin and omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.” Matt. 23: 23.

52. *Art thou also*, &c. They replied to the sober, weighty question of Nicodemus, not with argument, but with ridicule. This shows their blood-purposes. They had already concluded against Christ without trial. Hence they felt more keenly the home question of one of their number. This is the answer they had least expected to their inquiry, whether any of the rulers had believed on Him. They see, and they are worried by the fact that the contagion is spreading and even invading their own ranks. What else can they say in reply? In utter lack of reason they must use ridicule. They even descend to personal sneers. They want to know if he is also one of them—and a Galilean, as Jesus Himself, and as most of His followers. So they accused Peter in the judgment hall, “Of a truth this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” Their contempt for Galilee, and their vexation made them lose sight of the history. For it was not unknown to them that some of their own prophets had arisen out of Galilee, that is, had *been born* there. At least, Jonah and even Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, were

Search and look : for out of Galilee <sup>a</sup> ariseth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

<sup>a</sup> Is. 9. 1, 2.

Galileans; perhaps also Nahum and Hosea. Yet, at the risk of their own boasted learning in the Scriptures, they dare Nicodemus to search and see. Luther says, "Nicodemus's words touched their conscience and confused them so that they did not know what they said." They may have meant that no prophet who was *predicted as to come*, was to arise out of Galilee—and hence, they challenge him to examine the Scriptures as to whence "the prophet" predicted as the Messiah, or as the herald of the Messiah, was to arise.

53. The Sanhedrin seems to have broken up in some confusion—and so far, the protest of Nicodemus had effect. This verse which relates the scattering of the chief priests and Pharisees to their respective homes, is closely connected with the first verse of the following chapter; and they should not thus have been separated. For the contrast is meant to be shown between our Saviour's course and theirs. They went to their own houses. Jesus, who had no home of His own, went to the mount, where he often resorted from the city and from His persecutors, for meditation and prayer.

## CHAPTER VIII.

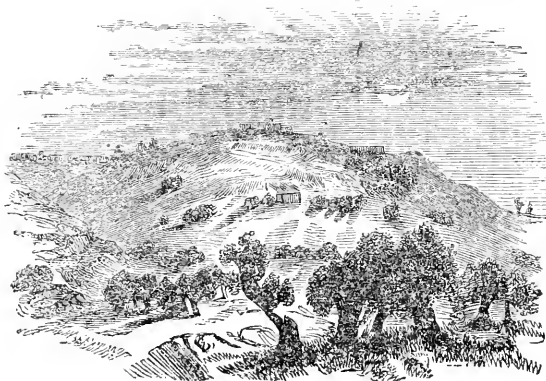
JESUS went unto the Mount of Olives.

## CHAPTER VIII.

This passage, (1-12,) with the closing verse of ch. 7, is judged by many critics to be spurious. Alford regards this as an *authentic fragment of Apostolic teaching*, which was esteemed too valuable to be lost, and was therefore adopted into the sacred text, in or soon after the 4th century. It is not found in many of the ancient manuscripts and versions, and there are three different texts of it, which is remarkable, while many words and idioms are found here which are not elsewhere used by John. Besides, vs. 12 would connect very well with vs. 52, ch. 7. So that it is difficult to decide whether it is genuine or not.

This brief history has given great difficulty to interpreters. It is so brief, and gives so few of the circumstances, as to make it doubtful with many how the plot against our Lord is to be understood, in this case, vs. 6.

1. *Jesus went.* While every one of His opposers retired, in confusion, each to his own house, our Lord retired to the mountain where He so frequently resorted. † *Of Olives.* This is a high hill



¶ 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken

rising quite abruptly from the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and overlooking Jerusalem on the east side. At its foot, between the city and the hill, is the brook Cedron, and on its slope, just across the brook, is the garden of Gethsemane. ch. 18: 2. A winding footpath leads over the hill to Bethany (ch. 11: 1,) on the other side. Our Lord seems to have passed the night on the mount, perhaps at Bethany, where He was wont to resort, (ch. 11: 3, 5,) away from the bustle and turmoil of the crowded city, and from the malice of His enemies.

§ 84. THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.—*Jerusalem.*

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
|       |       |       | 8. 2-11. |

2. *The temple.* Not the temple proper, but the *porch* of the temple. There He was wont to teach. This sacred building, with all its courts, stood on the steep edge of the precipice, opposite the Mount of Olives, with Cedron and Gethsemane between. From the mount, (or hill,) therefore, as He went in and out daily, "He beheld the city," (Luke 19: 41,) and in front of all its buildings rose the temple, the scene of His labors.

5. As He was teaching the people, His persecutors of the Sanhedrim made trouble. It is not said whether they brought this woman to our Lord in the course of any legal proceeding against her, or not—but it is rather implied that it was for the purpose of involving Him in difficulty. Probably it was as they were taking her to the tribunal in the temple, where the court of the Sanhedrim sat, that they took this opportunity of perplexing Jesus—"The Romans, in settling the provincial govern-

in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now \* Moses in the law com-

a Le. 20. 10.

ment of Judea, which they had conquered, deprived the Jewish tribunals of the power of inflicting capital punishments. Ch. 18: 31. The law of Moses, however, was understood as condemning adulterers to be stoned to death. This woman had been taken in a way to make her guilt most clear. Jesus, therefore, as they supposed, must determine against the law, which inflicted death—or against the Romans, who suffered them not to put any one to death, and who would still less have allowed it for such a crime as adultery, which was not a capital offence among them."—*Greenleaf's Testimony.*

¶ *Stoned.* The punishment for this crime, by the Jewish law, was death. It is not said expressly that it should be by *stoning*. Lev. 20: 10; Deut. 22: 22-25; compare Exod. 31: 14; 35: 2, with Num. 15: 35, 36. *Strangling* was the common idea of capital punishment in Scripture, as we gather from the Rabbins, because it was the easiest of the four modes in use among them—viz., stoning, burning, beheading, strangling. "There were eighteen crimes to be punished with stoning. The mode was this—The offender was led to a place without the gates, two cubits high, his hands being bound. From hence one of the witnesses knocked him down, by a blow upon the loins. If that killed him not, the witness lifted up a stone, being the weight of two men, which chiefly the other witness cast upon him. If that killed him not, all Israel threw stones upon him. The party thus executed being quite dead, was afterwards, in greater ignominy, hanged on a tree till towards the sunset, at which time he and the tree were both buried."—*Godwyn*. In Deut. 22: 20-25, four species of fornication are mentioned;

manded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.*

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin

among you, \* let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

a De. 17. 7. Ro. 2. 1, 22.

with the first and third (20 and 23) the punishment of death by stoning is named—with the second and fourth, (vss. 22 and 25,) it merely said “*die.*” In Ezek. 16: 38-40, this crime was punished by stoning and thrusting through with a sword. If the adulteress was the daughter of a priest, she was to be *burned to death.*

6. *Tempting.* Putting Him to a test, in order to get a ground of accusation against him. How they hoped to entangle Him is not stated. But if He had decided that she should be put to death, they might accuse Him of interfering with the State, who legally claimed the power of life and death, though they often waived it as in the case of Stephen. If He decided to let her go, they might accuse Him of sanctioning crime and abrogating their law. Augustine, Luther and Calvin understand it rather thus—If He said *yea*, they would charge Him with deciding against that *compassion to sinners* which He preached. If He said *no*, they would hold Him as in opposition to Moses. ¶ *Wrote on the ground.* This was a common mode of showing one’s unwillingness to attend—or of expressing one’s indifference. ¶ *As though.* This last clause is not in the original, but is added by the translators, and conveys to some a wrong impression, as though our Lord meant to deceive. It was, rather, a customary way of showing that He meant to pay no attention to their inquiry; and they would so understand it.

7. They continued to ask (inquire) as before, pressing the question, and

determined to entangle Him in some difficulty. This led Him at length to reply. ¶ *Without sin.* Without sin of this kind—(not, *sinless*, nor free from this particular sin, as it can scarcely be supposed that all of them were adulterers, but)—free from sins of *uncleanness*. He meant to turn the tables upon themselves, and to confound them by convincing them all of sin. He was sent, not to deal with this or that particular sin, but with all sin—and He could charge them all with grievous sin, as He was the searcher of hearts. Therefore He challenges any one who could boast freedom from all such sin, to step forward and first cast the stone. This was to be done by the *witnesses*, according to the law, (Deut. 17: 7,) that they might feel their responsibility in giving evidence.

9. They had said that the law commanded that *such* should be stoned. They now perceive that they themselves were *such*. See vs. 46. ¶ *The eldest.* The term is, *presbyters*—elders. It seems to be taken here not officially, and yet may have respect to rank—those in highest repute—even unto the last, or lowest. It is not meant that they went out in the exact order of rank, but the general idea is expressed, that the one and the other withdrew; and it is also hinted that when the more elevated took leave, the less had less courage to remain.—*Thol.* ¶ *Alone*—with the woman, without her accusers, who had gone away. The disciples and people were also there, and the latter He addresses. vs. 12.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I

condemn <sup>a</sup> thee: go, and sin <sup>b</sup> no more.

¶ 12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I <sup>c</sup> am the light of the world: he that <sup>d</sup> followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

c. c. 3. 17. b. c. 5. 14. c. c. 1. 4; 9. 5. d. c. 12. 35, 46.

10. *Condemned thee.* He had challenged any innocent one among them, to act as witness and take the step required of witnesses by the law. But this would make such an one declare himself innocent, while he would really condemn himself, for he deserved the same. Therefore none came forward. This was our Lord's most sweeping sentence, unexpectedly bringing them all into the same condemnation, and driving them away convicted and self-condemned. They had shrunk from taking the part of public judicial process against her, and thus had implied a confession of their own guilt.

11. *Neither.* Our Lord would not take judicial measures against her, as the accusers had not done the part prescribed by the law, and He would not do the witnesses' part of throwing the first stone. Neither would He act as a magistrate, since He did not claim civil authority. Luther says: "He does not take from them their rights, and He lets Moses alone—says neither *yea* nor *nay*, but in a masterly way He says *both* to them. Why do you not what Moses commands? If you wish to judge according to my kingdom, let the case be with me. For my judgment is: This adulteress is not the only one—there is no one of you that is not just as perverse and wicked." They came to Him for a judicial decision. vs. 5. He shows in the next verse that He regarded her as a sinner, and condemned her in this sense: but He came not to condemn the world. This was not His errand, to enforce penalties and cut men off from hope, but that the world through Him might be saved.

§ 85. FURTHER PUBLIC TEACHING OF OUR LORD. HE REPROVES THE UNBELIEVING JEWS, AND ESCAPES.—*Jerusalem.*

|       |  |       |  |       |  |          |
|-------|--|-------|--|-------|--|----------|
| Matt. |  | Mark. |  | Luke. |  | John.    |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | 8.12-59. |

12. This verse may be read as connecting with vs. 52, ch. 7—the paragraph in regard to the woman being thrown in as a parenthesis. This is a continuation of the discourse, and the incident in regard to the woman may easily have occurred just then, and there, in the treasury: and after disposing of it, our Lord resumes His discourse to the disciples and the people who were present, while the persecuting, questioning Pharisees had retired in shame. Hence, this verse is introduced by the word "again," signifying that the discourse is resumed. Our Lord here proceeds with an allusion to the custom at the feast of Tabernacles, to light up two large golden chandeliers in the court of the women, the light of which illuminated the whole city. This was done on the first night of the feast, and some suppose on every night. And as before He alluded to the custom of carrying water from the pool of Siloam, (vs. 37: ch. 7:) so here He refers to the other custom as to *Light*, and proclaims Himself to be what that signifies. It is to be considered also, that the Jewish doctors were accustomed to call themselves "the Light of the world." Besides, it was one of the well known titles of the Messiah. "Arise, shine, for thy Light is come." Isa. 60: 1; 42: 6; 49: 6. So this Evangelist had represented Him—as the *Light*, and the *true Light*, which lighteth every



13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou<sup>a</sup> bearest record of

a c. 5. 31.

man that cometh into the world, (ch. 1, and notes,) as *THAT Light* also, pre-eminent and superior to lesser lights, like the Baptist, who was only as a morning star to the sun, heralding His way by a faint reflection of His glory. And yet John the Baptist, was “a burning and a shining light.” ch. 5: 35. Christ was “*the Light of Life*.” See ch. 1: 4, 9; 6: 48; Mal. 4: 2; Isa. 42: 6. “For with thee is the fountain of Life. In thy light shall we see Light.” He came “that those who see not, might see, and that those who see might be made blind.” The connexion therefore with the case of the woman, is sufficiently direct, for He had been exposing the darkness of their minds, and as “whatsoever doth make manifest is Light,” He had been showing thus His own essential Light, by His power to reveal the darkness of sinful nature. ¶ *He that followeth me*. Our Lord here sets forth the only way of getting the benefit of His Light.—It is by following Him. No light is of any benefit if one gets away at the farthest distance from it. One may even get down into a deep cell, or hide in a cavern away from the sweet shining of the sun, and thus he will be in darkness at noon-day. We must form a living habitual connexion with Christ, or we cannot enjoy the benefits of His Person and work. Besides, our Lord drew His illustration here from their ceremonies, in order to show the fulfilment of all the Mosaic ordinances in Himself. As if He had said, I am all that this splendid illumination of the temple-courts and of the city, signifies. Through Me alone it is that the world can have light, or any creature in the world. Through Me Jerusalem is to be the light of the world. Zecl. 1: 7–10. ¶ *In darkness*. Literally, in the darkness—that is, of nature and of the world that lieth in wickedness. In this connexion also, He often gave sight to the blind, to show by His miracles what He was and what He

thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto

came to do—to give light to them who sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death—to open the blind eyes of the soul. Ch. 9: 4, 5. ¶ *The Light of Life*. The light which we are promised in following Christ, is the light of Life. It leads to life, while apart from Him we must go down to death. He is the way, and the truth, and the life. He is the Life, and the truth which reveals it, and the way which leads to it. This light from golden chandeliers would go out. His light is eternal. It is “the light of life,” as the water He gives is “the water of life.” “This is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” ch. 17: 3. OBSERVE.—In the ancient tabernacle, there was the golden candlestick standing in the Holy Place, which represented the relative piety of the people, and yet pointed onward to Christ as the only pattern of perfect obedience.

13. The Pharisees now accuse Him of being a *self-witness*, because He bore witness of Himself—and that, as He had none to bear witness of Him, His own self-testimony stood unsupported and could not be received. It was a plain principle of common sense recognized also in their law, (Deut. 17: 6,) that no man's claim could be taken as sufficiently attested when it had no evidence except that of the interested party. But they do not say that His evidence is not sufficient and that it needs confirmation, but that it is not *true*. They did not call for further proof, but they use this flimsy pretext for rejecting all His claims. These Pharisees may not be the same as were mentioned in vs. 3.

14. See ch. 5: 31. The passages are not inconsistent. There He declared that if He had no testimony but His own, as a man might testify of himself merely, it would not be sufficient. But His was not such a case. For He had the Father's testimony,

them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but <sup>a</sup> ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

a c. 7. 28; 9. 29, 30.

which was entirely one with His. Here He declares that His witness of Himself was true *because* it was no common self-testimony, but the Father's also in Him, (vs. 16,) and of this vital, essential connexion He was infallibly sure. Hence, He says "*though,*" or *even if* I witness of myself, the case is altogether peculiar, and it is yet a double witness. Besides, He had already pointed them to John the Baptist's testimony of Him—and yet that was of small account as compared with that of the Father. See ch. 5. ¶ *I know*, &c. His witness was true as He claimed, for it resulted from His most absolute knowledge, to which men were, by nature, strangers, and could not attain. "Light," says Augustine, "both shows itself and other things. Light affords witness to itself. It opens sound eyes, and is its own evidence." Then also only he who knows can witness, and Jesus alone knew this. I know (He would say,) perfectly my origin, my mission, and my plans, and no human evidence could be free from any possibility of error, or have such absolute certainty as mine. ¶ *But ye cannot tell*. Literally—*ye do not know*. His origin in God, (whence I came,) and His return to God, (whither I go,) were divine actions which surpassed all human knowledge, and could not be reached except through divine revelation, which they would not receive.

15. *Ye judge after the flesh*. They were poor judges—for they judged from outward appearances—and could not comprehend spiritual and divine things. And they were carnal in their judgments, rejecting Him from mere prejudice, and pronouncing His word and claims untrue. His work was, however, not now a work of judgment, but

15 Ye judge after the flesh; I <sup>b</sup> judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my <sup>c</sup> judgment is true: for <sup>d</sup> I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

b c. 3. 17; 12. 47. c 1 Sa. 16. 7. Ps. 45. 6, 7; 72. 2. d ver. 29. c. 16. 32.

only of testimony. He was bearing witness to them—offering salvation with all its evidences—and pressing eternal life on their acceptance. He "came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." ch. 3: 17. So He had not even condemned the adulteress to death, but preached to her repentance and forgiveness and salvation. vs. 11. Though *judgment* is not what He now does, the time will come for it, and then these rejectors of His gracious, peace-speaking Gospel shall perish, because they rejected the light of life.

16. *And yet, if I judge*. Literally—*but, and even if I judge*. Though this is not my object or habit now, to judge any man, "because I came not to judge the world, but to save the world," (ch. 12: 47,) yet, even if I pass judgment as I am authorized to do, because the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, (ch. 6: 22,) "*my judgment is true*"—just because of this peculiar personal relation to the Father which they could not understand. The Father had given over to Him the whole work of judging the world at the last day, in order that thus His equality with the Father might be set forth, and "that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." ch. 6: 23. ¶ *True*. The term here is, in the best reading, the same as is used ch. 5: 30, and is different from the common word for *true*. It means, rather, *genuine*, as having in itself all perfection—as being all that is represented by the soundest ideas of judgment. His judgment also would be original and final, (without appeal,) for He was *not alone*, but was so personally associated with the Father, and so essentially one with the

17 It is also written <sup>a</sup> in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father <sup>b</sup> that sent me beareth witness of me.

<sup>a</sup> De. 17. 6; 19. 15. <sup>b</sup> e. 5. 37.

Father, that His acts as well as His testimonies, must needs have the highest confirmation.

17. *In your law.* He now puts the case home to them on their own principle that the law requires a double witness. vs. 13; Deut. 17: 6; 19: 15. The emphasis is upon "*your*"—the law which they had made so completely their own, and in which they boasted. ¶ *Of two men.* It was in the mouth of two or three witnesses, that every word should be established. This allowed of *two*, as enough. He now claims that He has two.

18. *I am one.* Our Lord here refers to His twofold nature in one Person. The Son and the Father, as of the blessed Trinity, are the two witnesses to whom He refers. He points to the Son of man which was in Heaven, while He was in His human nature on earth, as one witness. The Father was another—and *the Spirit* who had not yet been brought forward, would be a *third*. (See I John 5: 7, which is disputed as of doubtful authority, but the doctrine is elsewhere taught and is implied here.) The Jews might reject this as being, after all, His own evidence to Himself—as they did not understand His two natures. But so also would they reject the claim to the Father's testimony, because they did not admit that this had been given, and they would say that He had no witness but His own. What, therefore, could He ground His claim upon, so as to make it suit their wicked judgment? ¶ *The Father.* He had already said (ch. 5: 36.) that the *works* which the Father had given Him to finish, bore witness of Him that the Father had sent Him. "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." ch. 14: 10.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye <sup>c</sup> neither know me, nor my Father: if <sup>d</sup> ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 55. <sup>e</sup> 16. 3; 17. 25. <sup>d</sup> e. 14. 7, 9.

19. Could they have supposed that He meant by His Father, some mere man—or that He referred to Joseph, His reputed Father? Or was this question spoken in derision? He had surely often enough and plainly enough, declared that by His Father He meant Jehovah. And their question is intended to deny His claim in a way to put it to scorn—as much as if they had said, You have no other Father than an earthly one, like any of us. Where then, is your Father? "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Matt. 13: 55. This is an instance of their *judging after the flesh*, as He declared, (vs. 15,) and how could He furnish evidence suited to such carnal minds? For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God—for they are foolishness unto him—neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor. 2: 14. ¶ *Ye neither know me.* The great difficulty was that they did not know Him. His Divine nature—His heavenly origin—His Godhead—and hence, they did not know the sense in which He spake. They knew Him only as a man, and misjudged Him every way as such. They knew nothing of Him as the Son of the Eternal Father, and hence, they knew nothing of Jehovah as the Father of the Eternal Son, though they boasted their knowledge of God. ¶ *If ye had.* If they had really understood Him, who He was, and what He claimed, they would have known the Father also, for the one cannot be known apart from the other. Christ alone has revealed the Father, (ch. 1: 18.) as Himself being in the Father's bosom, and the Father, is the Father of the adorable Son, and cannot be known apart from this. ch. 6: 46; 14: 7-9; 5: 23. "I and my Father are one."

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, <sup>a</sup> as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for <sup>b</sup> his hour was not yet come.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye <sup>c</sup> shall

<sup>a</sup> Mar. 12. 41. <sup>b</sup> c. 7. 30. <sup>c</sup> c. 7. 34.

OBSERVE.—1. It is only through the revelation which Christ has made, that we can sufficiently know God. 2. The way to know the Father is to learn of Christ. 3. This is Life Eternal—to know the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ as sent by Him. 4. As Christ and the Father are essentially one, how can they who reject Christ, ever dwell with God, or ever have any correct and saving knowledge of God?

20. *Treasury.* There were thirteen chests in the court of the women, in which the offerings for the temple were placed. In this very court were the great chandeliers, which had been lighted at the feast, and from which Jesus had drawn an illustration of Himself as the Light of the world. It was proper, therefore, to note that His discourse was spoken in this place. ¶ *For His hour.* We see how the Holy Spirit all along gives notice of this fact—that as the hour appointed by the Godhead for His suffering unto death, had not arrived, no man laid hands upon Him. This was the only explanation of their keeping back. See ch. 7: 30, &c.

21. *Again.* Jesus now addresses them very much as He had done, ch. 7: 33. This concludes the series of His discourses to the Jews. It was about six months before His crucifixion. ¶ *I go my way.* He refers to His approaching death as being voluntary. Men could not kill Him, if He did not purpose to die. Therefore, while it was *their way* to kill Him, He would only be going *His way*, viz: to the Father who sent Him. ch. 7: 34; 8: 14. ¶ *Shall seek me.* See notes on ch. 7: 33, &c. Our Lord here speaks

seek me, and <sup>d</sup> shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye <sup>e</sup> cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, Ye

<sup>d</sup> Job 20. 11. Ps. 73. 18–20. Pr. 14. 32. Is. 65. 20. Ep. 2. 1. <sup>e</sup> Lu. 16. 26.

still more plainly and pointedly than before, until their enmity rises to the highest pitch. He declares to them the dreadful consequence of their rejecting Him, and of His withdrawal from them, (vss. 23–24,) the conviction which should seize them when they should have put Him to death. 26–29. He gently leads those who have the first beginnings of faith in Him, and exposes the Jewish pride and malice of His enemies, (30–47,) and then finally takes occasion from their further charges to declare His own dignity and glory. 48–58. ¶ *Die in your sins.* Literally, *in your sin*. This is explained in vs. 24. If they persisted in their unbelief and rejection of Him, they could have no salvation—they must die in their sin, because they rejected the only Saviour from the power and curse of sin. ¶ *Whither I go.* By this He shows His perfect knowledge of all that was to come upon Him, and that His departure from the world, though it was to be by their bloody hands, was entirely of His own will, and included in the Divine plan for the salvation of men. He was to go to the Father, (ch. 17: 1.) and thither they could not come, just because they would die in their sin. Their sin would be unrepented of and unforgiven, and as He would go His way, and to His own place, so they must go their way and to their own place, as Judas went. Acts 1: 25.

22. *Kill Himself.* Here again they pervert His words, yet differently from before. ch. 7: 25. Here also, as there, they are full of reproach and scorn—for they regarded suicide as a crime that inevitably led to hell.

23. He now enters into an expla-

are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said <sup>a</sup> therefore unto you,

<sup>a</sup> ver. 21.

nation. They belonged to different worlds—and hence, they could not, in departing this life, go to the same place. OBSERVE.—Sinners perish, not by any arbitrary decree of God, but by the very necessities of the case—just as a stone *sinks* in the water, while an ark *floats*. “Except a man be born again”—obtain a new nature—he must naturally go to perdition just because he is from beneath—all his tastes and tendencies are to destruction—to the world and portion of the lost. “Except a man be born again, he CANNOT see the Kingdom of God.” ch. 3. 2. They whose joy and portion are in this world, must perish with it. Therefore the tender exhortation of this Evangelist is: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” for such a love proves the worldly, unregenerate nature—for “if any man love the world, (as his portion,) the love of the Father is not in him.” And so his end is sure. For the world passeth away, and its votaries must perish with it, “but He that doeth the will of God, abideth forever.” 1 John 4. This is the great, fixed, eternal principle from which none can possibly escape, and which none can blot out, because it belongs to the very nature of things. 1 John 4, 5; ch. 3: 31; James 3: 15.

24. *I said, therefore.* This is the explanation—the principle from which there can be no departure. This makes the case perfectly clear and sure. ¶ *For.* If they perished it would be by their unbelief and rejection of Him. Literally, it reads, “If ye believe not that I AM”—that is, that I am God—the Son of God and the true Messiah. The name of Jehovah with which they were familiar in their Old Testament Scriptures was, “*I am.*” And this form of expression might convey to them a further hint of His claim. So

that ye shall die in your sins: for <sup>b</sup> if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him,

<sup>b</sup> Mar. 16. 16.

in ch. 6: 20, the reading is, “*I am,*” though it is rendered, “*It is I.*” OBSERVE—1. John in his Epistles dwells much upon this great truth—and shows that the confession of Christ as come in the flesh is an evidence of the new birth—while a denial of Him as being the Son of God is a mark of Antichrist. 1 Jno. 4: 3. 2. Christ offers the only way of salvation, and whoever refuses to believe in Him refuses the only hope, and must therefore die in his sin. 3. Unbelief in Christ is the great fundamental sin, at the root and source of all sin. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit comes He convicts men of *sin*, because they believe not on Christ. ch. 16: 9. 4. Men are in a state of sin by nature, alienated from God by wicked works; and without a living faith in Christ the only Saviour from sin, they must die as they have lived, in a state of alienation from God—unreconciled to God.

25. *Who art thou?* They still insult Him by stubbornly asking of Him, *who He is*—as though He had not already told them—or, as though He must make Himself to be something else, before they could comprehend His language. This profession of the most profound ignorance after all that He had said, was the most downright defiance of the threat which He had just uttered. As much as to say, “*who are you*, and what have we to do with believing in you. We know nothing about you”—as having any such superior claims. The dreadful insolence of these men might justly have brought upon them swift destruction. But behold the forbearance of our Lord. He came not to *judge*, or surely these must have been sentenced and hurled into perdition. Still He forbears, and gives them yet space for repentance, only forewarning them of their certain doom if they continue to

Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say and judge of you: but <sup>a</sup> he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard of him.

a c. 7. 28.

disbelieve and reject Him. ¶ *Even.* This properly reads, "What I am speaking to you all along from the beginning"—or—"In very deed—essentially—that same which I am speaking to you all along." What He reveals Himself to be, *that* He is. "I am, that I am." Exod. 3: 14. The term rendered "*in the beginning*," rather means here, *primarily—essentially—*"traced up to its principle."—*Alford.* See also Is. 52: 6. He could only answer to all questions concerning Him by reiterating the declarations He had made, as He had been laboring to set forth His proper dignity and glory—the mystery of His Godhead, which they could not and would not understand.

26. As to Himself, He had much that He might say and judge concerning them, as in vs. 23, 24. He had, however, declared to them faithfully the truth of their sin and danger—and He might go on to blame and condemn them more and more. But He was now acting under a commission from the Father—having a definite testimony to give—and what He had said of Himself and of them, was simply in accordance with this commission. He thus again refers them for His origin and authority to the Father whom they professed to worship—and as for Himself, though He might now doom them to perdition, He confined his discourse to these things. Our Lord is meek and lowly in heart, and gives liberally without upbraiding. He came, "not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." He was kindly but faithfully urging on them the claims of salvation with a view to reclaim them, and with many

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up <sup>b</sup> the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

b c. 3. 14; 12. 32.

it had this effect. vs. 30. We may learn, hence, how we should deal tenderly but plainly with men for their salvation. ¶ *To the world.* He had a testimony for the world at large which He must deliver. This was His work. He could not stop now to speak and to judge of them as He might do. The judgment day would come soon.

27. *They understood not.* Literally—they *knew* not. They did not recognize this, nor lay it to heart, but were likely to overlook the fact, as He did not speak of the Father by name. Therefore, He proceeds more expressly to speak of His relations to the Father. OBSERVE—How amazingly ignorant are men of the most common truths of religion, where they have no relish for them. Those who are well informed in all other kinds of knowledge, stumble and show their ignorance about the plainest doctrines of God's word. "*Having the understanding darkened.*"

28. He now refers them forward to the guilty transaction in which they should soon show their hostility toward Him. That should be to them a day of clear and fearful revelation. ¶ *Lifted up.*—When ye shall lift up, (as ye will do,) &c. See ch. 3: 14. He here points them out almost as distinctly as He afterwards pointed out Judas at the table. He refers, by this language, to His death upon the cross, when He should be suspended as a malefactor; and He forewarns them of what they should do to Him. ¶ *Son of Man.* When He spoke of being lifted up, (ch. 3: 14,) it was as "the Son of Man." He took a body, in order to suffer a sacrificial death for sinners. Heb. 10: 5. ¶ *That I am.* The pronoun "*He*," is not in the Greek text

29 And he that sent me is with me : The Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him.

here : and the sense is more striking without it—" *that I am.*" The centurion was convicted at His death. Miracles attested His divine commission—as the rising of the dead, and their going through Jerusalem, after His resurrection. Beyond this, His resurrection and ascent to glory would show who He was, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost perhaps brought conviction to these very persons. In all these things He should have the Father's seal set to His claims and to His work—and this would silence their doubts as to His acting alone as a mere man, and without authority from Heaven. From the time of His crucifixion, the Jewish people more or less began to see who He was. See Matt. 27 : 54 ; Luke 23 : 48 ; Acts 2 : 41 ; 6 : 7 ; 12 : 24 ; 19 : 20. ¶ *But as my Father.* See ch. 5 : 20, notes. They should then see His relation to the Father, which was now so dark and repugnant to them. They would then behold the evidence from on High, which He had all along claimed. Acts 2.

29. *Is with me.* This is something further than the mere commission, or authority. He enjoyed the Father's presence. This refers farther, to the mystery of the *oneness* which He had with the Father. He was not appointed to do His work alone, nor was He acting alone—but in close companionship with the unseen Father—the Father's fellow. Ch. 1 : 1. ¶ *Hath not left me alone.* So fully does He express, in every variety of form, the great truth of His essential partnership in the Godhead. He was "*sent*," yet not so as to be separated from the Father who sent Him. See vs. 16. And this essential union of natures is evidenced by the character of His works. Ch. 5 : 37, 38. ¶ *For.* This is given as amply justifying such a connection. The Father loves Him because He laid down

30 As he spake these words, many <sup>a</sup> believed on him.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If

a c. 10. 42.

His life in the work of redemption. Ch. 10 : 17. The Father, also, declared Himself *well pleased* in Him, and in His work. Matt. 3 : 17. It is a work done by covenant with the Father. ¶ *That please.* That are *pleasing*, *acceptable* to Him.

30. This earnest, pointed discourse of our Lord led many to renounce their unbelief. Conviction was carried to their minds. Yet it was not even His forcible presentation of truth, but the Divine Spirit, which alone could secure true conversion. The same Spirit which the humblest minister of Christ needs to bless his labors, our Lord required to make even *His* preaching effectual. This Spirit was given already at times, and in a measure, though not fully and universally until Christ was glorified. Ch. 7 : 39.

31. Our Lord now proceeds to strengthen these weak disciples—fortifying them for the future trials of life, and warning them of their only security. Every thing would depend on their continuing in His doctrine, and enduring unto the end. They would have many temptations to depart from His word and ways. He saw in them perhaps an intellectual persuasion, without any hearty trust. And these words would, at any rate, be adapted to the different classes and characters. ¶ *Continue.* The same term is elsewhere rendered, *dwell*, (ch. 15,) *abide*. They were not only to express and profess their belief now under this discourse, and soon depart from it—but they were to abide in His doctrine—"continuing steadfastly" in it—"rooted and grounded" in it. ¶ *In my word.* In the doctrine which is mine. In the revelation of Himself, which He made. It is only by abiding in Christ that we can be disciples indeed—or bear any fruit of discipleship, that shall show us to be living. Ch. 15 : 7. They pro-

ye continue <sup>a</sup> in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know <sup>b</sup> the truth, and the truth shall make ye free.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 2: 7. Col. 1: 23. He. 10: 38, 39. <sup>b</sup> Hos. 6: 3. <sup>c</sup> Ps. 119: 43, c. 17: 17. Ro. 6: 14; 18: 24. Jas. 1: 25; 2: 12.

fessed their belief in His claims. But they might reject some of His humbling doctrines. The result would soon appear. It is by following on to know the Lord that we truly know Him, (Hos. 6: 3,) and are truly proved to be His disciples—attending humbly upon all His teachings.

32. A happy result of this abiding in His doctrine is, that with a sincere disposition to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall know it, and it shall work out our glorious deliverance. "If any man is willing to do His will he shall know of the doctrine." See note, ch. 7: 17. ¶ *The truth.* The revelation of Christ in the Gospel is the highest truth, worthy of being called truth itself. ¶ *Make you free.* Shall give you true liberty. The truest personal liberty is announced in the religion of Christ, and brings to the believer, freedom from the slavery and captivity of sin. Rom. 6: 16, 17, 19, 20; 7: 6, 8, 11; 8: 21. The service of God is the highest freedom. When the truth as it is in Jesus comes to the heart, it works at once a wonderful freedom from harassing cares and from turbulent passions—from Satan's tyranny, and from the fear of death. It comprehends the freeing of the intellect (2 Cor. 3: 17) and the freeing of the will from the bondage of sinful nature. Rom. 7: 23. This idea is found with all the apostles, as a doctrine peculiar to Christianity. Rom. 6: 18; 7: 6; 8: 21; Gal. 5: 1-15; 4: 29-31; 1 Pet. 2: 16; Jas. 1: 25; 2: 12. But this idea they could not understand. How little do unbelievers know in what bondage they are, or into what "*glorious liberty of the children of God*" they might be brought by the Gospel message. "Let Papists," says Calvin, "now go and proudly vaunt of their free-will; but let us who

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in <sup>a</sup> bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

<sup>d</sup> Le. 25: 42.

are conscious of our own slavery, glory in none but in Christ our Deliverer." Some men speak as though an enslaved will were nothing, and as though it could be easily got rid of, by *so willing*, when this is just the greatest difficulty. We could will aright, if our will were not depraved and defiled and enslaved. And this is the most serious bondage, where *the will* is the very thing that is concerned. "It is God that worketh in us both *the willing* and *the doing*, of His good pleasure;" and this is our only hope—Christ has come to set us free from this and every bondage of sin.

33. This reply seems to have been made by unbelievers in the crowd, and not by the same persons, (the many,) who are spoken of as having believed, unless we suppose, with some, that it was made to those who believed in a general sense, but were not yet disciples *indeed*, as not being ready to "abide" in His doctrine. But as our Lord in vs. 31, spoke expressly to those of the company "*who believed on Him*," the inference is, that the reply here made, came from the other class—the unbelievers. ¶ *Abraham's seed.* They claimed that they were descended directly from the patriarch, and were not bondmen. But this was at best only their boasting pretension—for their ancestors had been bondmen in Egypt, and in Babylon had been captives: and now they themselves were groaning under the Roman yoke. Yet they still vainly imagined a certain kind of independence. "The most common laborer, who is of the seed of Abraham, is equal to kings," says the Jewish Talmud. OBSERVE.—1. Those who are the greatest slaves to sin, are often the least aware of it, and least willing to acknowledge it, and are the most unwilling to be charged with it. 2. The very men who longed to be



34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever <sup>a</sup> committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant <sup>b</sup> abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If <sup>c</sup> the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye <sup>d</sup> shall be free indeed.

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 6. 16, 20. <sup>2</sup> Pe. 2. 19. <sup>b</sup> Ga. 4. 30. <sup>c</sup> Is. 61. 1. <sup>d</sup> Ro. 8. 2. Ga. 5. 1.

released from political bondage, and sought a Messiah who would do this, were indignant at the very mention of being made *free*, because it implied that they were *slaves*.

34. Our Lord now shows in what sense He promised freedom—not as they really would like, from political bondage—but from the power of sin. ¶ *Committeth*. That is, *practiceth*—habitually doeth. ¶ *Sin*.—*The sin*: for *one sin* may hold a man in perfect bondage, and whatsoever sin it is that he practices, *that sin* enslaves him. ¶ *Is the servant*, (slave,) *of the sin*. Rom. 6: 16; 2 Pet. 2: 19.

35. He now refers to the distinction between two different descendants of Abraham. Some are his posterity by Isaac, but others by Ishmael. The latter are cast out as the children of the *bondswoman*, and only the former, the true children, can remain in the house, entitled to all its privileges. This is explained in Galat. 4: 19, &c. This was insisted on by the apostles, especially by the *apostle to the Gentiles*, against their vain boast of an outward descent—that “They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children. But in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Rom. 9: 6, 7, 8, 12. “He is not a Jew who is one outwardly.” Rom. 2: 28, &c. See Gal. 4: 30, with Gen. 21: 10.

36. They therefore were, after all their boasts, not real sons, and could be saved only by a living connexion with the New Testament Isaac, “the Son of promise,” the Lord Jesus. In

37 I know that ye are Abraham’s seed: but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I <sup>e</sup> speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham <sup>f</sup> is our father

<sup>e</sup> c. 14. 10, 24. <sup>f</sup> Matt. 3. 9.

this way, also, they would come into the relation of *sons*, and be introduced into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. 8: 17. ¶ *Free indeed*. The term is not the same as is rendered “*indeed*” vs. 32, where it meant *truly*, in distinction from *falsely*. Here it means rather, *essentially, substantially*.

37. He admits their Abrahamic lineage according to the flesh, but He speaks of a true Israel, who are according to the Spirit. “And *if ye be Christ’s*, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal. 3: 29. This idea is found running through the prophets, as Isaiah, &c. and is the basis of some of the glowing predictions of what awaits Israel, the true church, the spiritual seed, the genuine discipleship. Now, though they were Abraham’s seed according to the flesh, they were showing by their works that they were slaves to sin, and needed deliverance, and were even rather, the children of the Devil, as He would show. ¶ *Hath no place*. Has no room, finds no lodgment—is not entertained, and received in you. How obstinate is the opposition of the carnal heart, to the truth in Christ. This showed them to be vitally different from Him, and proved them to be children of the Devil, whose murderous spirit sprang also from hatred of the truth, vs. 44.

38. He here re-asserts His vital connexion with the Father, and shows their proper relation to *their father*, (vs. 44,) in both which they may be known by their fruits.

39. They thought they had an ad-

Jesus saith unto them, If <sup>a</sup> ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this <sup>b</sup> did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication;

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 2. 28, 29; 9. 7. <sup>b</sup> Ga. 3. 7, 29. <sup>c</sup> Ro. 4. 12.

vantage now, as He had declared that they did the works of their father—for surely they said, they were the children of Abraham, and this was just what they boasted. But, instead of proving their fruit from their outward origin, He would prove their real origin from their fruit. ¶ *Children*. The term here is not the same as for *seed*—there was a great difference. True enough they were the *seed* of Abraham, but not his *children*—descendants, but not *sons*, for else they would have done as he did—and thus would have proved that they inherited his character and spirit. Paul also makes this distinction. Rom. 4: 11, 12; 9: 8.

40. What then do they do, so contrary to Abraham's works? See vs. 37. In thus persecuting Him they proved themselves hostile to the truth which He received from the Father, and they were fighting against God. This is the attitude of unbelievers, battling with the only Lord God, and vainly contending with the Sovereign of the universe. How shocking the folly of caviling at what is shown to be *God's truth*. ¶ *This did not*. This is utterly contrary to Abraham's practice. "Abraham believed God," &c. vs. 56. Gen. 18.

41. He would now prove upon them a different parentage, tracing it from their works. It was true that they did the works of their real father, and thus showed whose children they were, by their conduct. Abraham would not have acknowledged them. They now affect to be indignant, and charge Him with calling them "*bas-*

we <sup>c</sup> have one Father, *even* God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If <sup>d</sup> God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but <sup>e</sup> he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my <sup>f</sup> word.

<sup>c</sup> Is. 63. 16; 64. 8. <sup>d</sup> Mal. 1. 6. <sup>e</sup> 1 Jno. 5. 1. <sup>f</sup> c. 17. 8, 25. <sup>g</sup> Is. 6. 9.

*tards*, (Heb. 12: 8,) and not sons," which was indeed spiritually true. They claimed to be the lawful children of Abraham, who was the founder and head of Israel. Isa. 63: 16; 64: 8; Deut. 32: 6. ¶ *One Father*. They also boasted, that as a nation they alone were the children of God, and that Abraham and themselves, had a common father, even God. So that any other intimation was an insult to the whole Jewish people. They seem to have caught a hint of the higher sense in which He spoke, and laid their claims high, accordingly.

42. Our Lord here takes them up upon this profession, and shows how false it was, as proved by their treatment of Him, who had come from God, to reveal the Father. He was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." How false must be that pretence of love to God, which rejects Christ Jesus.

43. Our Lord now brings the matter to a point, and traces all their opposition to its source in the depraved nature. ¶ *Understand*—take cognizance of—apprehend. Why is there this dullness, and this perversion of my speech? He refers to the spiritual sense which all along ran through His discourse, and which, with all His explanation, they were so slow to understand. How blind is the natural mind! The simplest truths which a child might understand, cannot be made clear to such. And why is this? He gives the reason. ¶ *Cannot hear*. Literally—*ye are not able to hear*. It

44 Ye \* are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode <sup>b</sup>

a Matt. 13. 38. 1 Jno. 3. 8. b Jude 6.

is a deep-seated inability—not of the ears or outward hearing. If this were all, the impressions could be conveyed through the eyes. But it was an inability of *heart*, which prevented them from hearing favorably His discourse. They cried, “This is an hard saying, who can hear it?” who is able to give ear to it? ch. 6: 60. This native, inbred repugnance to the truth is not physical, but it is natural—that is, *by nature*, and it is all the worse because it is moral and spiritual, instead of physical. If it were only that a man’s limbs were chained so that he could not go to the house of God to hear the Gospel, this would be a trifle, so long as he had the hearty inclination to receive it. But alas! though the “*cannot*,” in the view of many, is no inability, because it is only a “*will not*,” it is on this very account the greatest inability, as the will is enslaved and needs to be delivered. It is depraved and needs to be renewed. It is repugnant, and needs to be converted. Melancthon says, “Ye are not able, because the preponderating bias of the heart draws it to evil.” “By putting the question,” says Calvin, “He intends to take out of their hands what was the subject of their continual boasting, that they are led by *reason and judgment* to oppose Him.” How ignorant are they who claim to be so enlightened as to reject God’s word—His only written revelation from Heaven! How enslaved are they who boast of being *free thinkers*, and who cry out against trammels of Christian doctrine and of religious truth! Our Lord, the final Judge, here traces their true paternity, shows who is their father, and whence their works proceed.

44. *Ye will do.* Literally—*ye will to do*. This is much more than is expressed in our English version. It is not saying merely what they *will do*

14\*

not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

in future—but what they are inclined to do, by nature and habit—what their choice is. This is the condemnation—that men *choose* darkness rather than light. They are heartily disposed to evil, and this is their slavery. It is not such a slavery as binds them hand and foot against their will, but a slavery that *binds their will* to act in a swift and ready obedience to Satan. ¶ *A murderer.* They show themselves the true children of Satan, for He was a murderer, and the first murderer, and they, in seeking to kill Him, were only showing the spirit of his children. ¶ *From the beginning.* That is, from the very beginning of society, in the outset of man’s history. Satan brought sin and death into the world by deceiving our first parents, and the first murder immediately followed their fall, and grew out of it—so that Satan was the parent of it. 1 John 3: 8. “He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” 1 John 3: 12. “Cain—who was of THAT WICKED ONE, and slew his brother” We see that Satan is a *real person*, and active among men. ¶ *Abode not.* The fall of Satan is here referred to, and in this state of apostacy, He is the parent of all apostates—so that, secondly, He is not only a *murderer*, but a *liar*, and hater of the truth—and in this respect also, they showed their real parentage. This shows that the seduction of our first parents is the murder here spoken of, in which Satan showed his true character of falsehood. Gen. 3: 4. *OBSERVE*—Satan was created holy, but in this estate he *abode not*. He was a leader of those angels “who kept not their first estate.” Jude, vs. 6. ¶ *No truth.* No *truthfulness*. His lie has become his very nature, and this, therefore, is his life, and such as hate the truth are his children. ¶ *His*

45 And because <sup>a</sup> I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth <sup>b</sup> me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear

<sup>a</sup> Ga. 4. 16. 2 Th. 2. 10. <sup>b</sup> He. 4. 15.

*own.* The term is plural. Of his own things—"out of his own treasures or resources." Matt. 12: 35. Out of the evil treasures of his heart, he bringeth forth the evil things, and so it is with his children. They deal in lies. Nothing so proves one to be a child of the devil, as the habit of lying. "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." ¶ *Father of it.* Rather—the father of him—that is, of *the liar*, and of every liar—and, of course, of these lying Jews.

45. Ye display the character of the devil—ye delight in his works—for he plotted the murder and destruction of men from the beginning. Falsehood is his most prominent trait, and, therefore, ye do not believe me, because I speak the truth. This was the crowning condemnation—that *just because* our Lord told them the truth in regard to themselves and the only way of salvation, they believed Him not. If He had told them some pleasing falsehood, they would have received it. If one should come to them in his own name, and not in the Father's, *him* they would receive. ch. 5: 44. How true is it that it is *the truth* which men object to, because they do not relish it. But if it be, nevertheless, *the truth*—and especially, the saving truth, how mad is it in them to reject it. Will they have only what is pleasing—whether true or false? and

"Once wedded fast

To some dear falsehood, hug it to the last?"

46. *Which.* Literally, *who of you* convicteth me of sin? "*Convinceth*," is not the word here used. It was not to satisfy Him of any sin, that He here challenged them. *Convicteth* is the term. The question was, who of them

*them* not, because ye are not of God.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and <sup>c</sup> hast a devil?

49 Jesus answered, I have not

<sup>c</sup> c. 7. 20.

could prove any sin against Him, to show that He was not a faithful servant of God. He asserted his perfect sinlessness, as a reason why He should be received as sent from God. ¶ *And if.* Unless they could show either from His life or His doctrine that He was false, why did they not receive and believe Him? Plainly because they were, as He said, the children of the devil, and so were opposed to truth itself. This answers His own question in the preceding verse.

47. If they were of God they would surely show it, by hearing and receiving the words of God—the revelation He gave by His Son. Thus He forced upon them their opposition to God's truth, as growing out of their alienation from God. Thus He *convicted them* of sin. This was most conclusive against them.

48. They can reply to this only by railing accusation. Men often repel the truth by reviling at the messenger or the message. They had quarreled long with the truth—now they cavil at Him and rail madly at His spotless person. ¶ *Say we not well.* He was repeatedly charged with casting out devils by league with the prince of the devils. And here they charged Him with being crazed. ¶ *A Samaritan.* This was the severest reproach among the Jews, to call one a Samaritan, or heathen—with whom they *had no dealings*. Ch. 4: 9. But this was not enough. They charged Him with having a devil also—with being demoniacally possessed.

49. How mildly Jesus answers to all such bitter revilings. He only re-asserted His claims and the purity of His doctrine and work. And more than this, He would let them know,

a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 And I <sup>a</sup> seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, Verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, <sup>b</sup> and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?

a c. 5. 41. b Zec. 1. 5.

that He sought not mere human applause—their scandal would not harm Him. He would do His Father's work, and refer all the results to Him who seeketh His honor, and judgeth what is right. Ch. 5: 23.

51. Wonderful grace is it that our Lord yet still further puts forward the invitation of the gospel, even to such willful and wicked revilers. He would show them here, the blessed effects of keeping, cherishing and abiding in His word, which they, as children of the devil, could not receive. ¶ See death. Shall not die eternally. Ch. 11: 26.

52. From this the Jews, (the rulers and leaders of them,) took advantage, and supposed they could now entangle Him. They took Him to mean *bodily death*, and they supposed they could contradict Him, and prove Him to be false, by saying that Abraham and the prophets who were good men, and had kept God's words, *had died*.—They blasphemed Christ: and yet the compassionate Saviour bore with them.

53. *Art thou greater.* So the Samaritan woman asked: Art thou greater than our father Jacob? ch. 4: 11. This pride of ancestry and of the old economy came up to resist the claims of Christ. ¶ *Is dead.* Rather, *who died.* ¶ *Whom makest thou.* As

And the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, If <sup>c</sup> I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my father <sup>d</sup> that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he <sup>e</sup> saw *it*, and was glad.

c c. 5. 31, 41. d c. 17. 1. e He. 11. 13.

much as to say, who are you? How can you pretend to keep your followers from dying, when all the great and good who were God's favorites died. What power is this that You are claiming for Yourself?

54. He replied, referring them again to the Father, whom they boasted as their God, and whom they worshipped. This was all along what our Lord meant, by constantly claiming to have been sent by *the Father*, and to have had *the Father's* testimonies. Since they professed to worship *the Father*, they were bound to receive Him and His message.

55. Yet the difficulty lay in their ignorance of the Father whom they claimed to know so entirely, and in their rejection of Him who came to reveal Him.

56. *Rejoiced.* The term is one expressive of strong delight. Our Lord meets them with the fact that their father Abraham, whom they so much boasted, was a believer in Him, and that if they were true children of Abraham, they would also gladly receive Him. And thus also in the sense which He intended, Abraham was living and had not seen death. Luke 20: 37, 38. The literal meaning of the passage is, "Abraham rejoiced that he should see my day." He looked forward

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

to it, with all the confidence of faith—it was cherished by him as a joyful reality *yet to come*; and the benefits of it he fully expected to realize. It was in regard to this seed of promise that “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” Gen. 15: 6; Rom. 4: 3. He, like the other patriarchs and prophets, “died in faith, not having received the promises, (in their fulfillment,) but having *seen them afar off*, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,” &c. Heb. 11: 13. The promise of Christ’s coming was made to Abraham. “*To thy seed—which is Christ.*” Gal. 3: 16. He was also favored with a view of Christ’s death as a sacrifice for sin, as it was shadowed forth to him in the command to offer Isaac. Gen. 22: 1–13; compare Heb. 11: 19. The expectation of the Messiah’s time, as to be realized by him, in all its benefits, was the source of lively, exultant joy to Abraham. ¶ *He saw it.* That is—*afar off*. Heb. 11: 13. And he so entered into it, by faith, as a reality certainly to be enjoyed, that it had with him the power of a present experience. He saw it as represented—and was justified by the faith of it, “when he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar.” Jas. 2: 21. ¶ *And was glad.* He so vividly saw it in the distance as to be gladdened by the vision of it, and this prospect of it cheered him in his life and death. The name “Isaac” signifies *laughter*. Perhaps the meaning may also be, that he saw it in his glorified state. “It is not said that he saw Christ, but Christ’s *day*—these latter days—the time of Christ’s kingdom when he appeared in the world clothed with flesh, to fulfill the office of a Redeemer.”—*Calvin*. This passage, therefore, is not at all inconsistent with Luke 10: 24. There was everything in this declaration calculated to strike from under them their ground of boasting, and to show how

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I <sup>a</sup> am.

a Ex. 3. 14. Is. 43. 13. c. 1. 1, 2. Col. 1. 17. Re. 1. 8.

idle is the objection drawn from the name of Abraham. And if he so exulted in seeing Christ’s coming, as it was set forth in promises and prophecies, how opposite to him must they be who reject Christ when He has come! Our advantages are much greater than those of the most favored patriarchs. *To see Christ’s day as we see it—to live in the times of the gospel dispensation*, is the highest privilege. And our responsibilities are proportionably great.

57. The Jews at once charged Him with the absurdity of saying that somehow He had been seen by Abraham, and as they knew that Abraham had died so long before, they would have Him explain how it could possibly be. ¶ *Fifty*. He was not even fifty years old, they said. He was in fact only about *thirty-three*. But He might have appeared much older, as He was “*a man of sorrows*,” and they could say that, at any rate, He was *not fifty yet*—perhaps conveying also a sarcasm, in naming this greater age. As much as to say, You are making yourself centuries old, and we are sure you are not fifty yet, at oldest; for fifty would more than cover all your claims to age. *And hast thou seen Abraham?* This He had not said; only they were determined to misunderstand and pervert His language. They were willing enough to charge upon Him this absurdity. He had a higher meaning.

58. *Before Abraham*, &c. Here He brings out the astonishing truth, which they were so poorly able to comprehend, and so unwilling to receive. He here asserts His essential pre-existence—that He existed before Abraham. ¶ *Was*. This word is different from that which is here used to express our Lord’s existence. More literally, it would read “before Abraham *was born*, or *was made*, (implying that Abraham had a beginning,) I AM.” And in this connection the use of this different

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

verb, in reference to Himself, implying *essential existence*, and immutable, independent being, (in the present,) would show that He claimed an undervived origin. ¶ *I am*. This was the very form in which Jehovah declared Himself under the Old Testament—"I am that I am." It was understood to imply His uncreated and essential being. And His object here was to show that He existed as God *in the beginning*, and that the Word was with God, and was God. Ch. 1: 1. In His divine nature He existed before Abraham was made, though in His human nature He was only thirty-three years old. This declaration was also made most solemnly, somewhat in the form of an oath—"Verily, verily"—and it was therefore important for John's purpose, which was to establish, in every way, the proper Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ—not merely that He was divinely commissioned, or of a divine nature, but that He was truly God. He does not say "*I was*," but "*I am*," as implying also that He was the very same yesterday and to-day and forever. It is not the mission and work of our Lord that is here spoken of, but His nature and essence, to meet the question as to His existence in Abraham's time.

59. *To stone*, &c. They probably held Him guilty according to their law. Levit. 24: 16. "We see how great is the madness of inconsiderate zeal."—*Calvin*. We need not suppose any miraculous escape here. But the connexion rather favors such an influence. Calvin says, "I have no doubt that Christ rescued Himself by His secret power; but yet under the appearance of a low condition—not intending to make a clear display of His divinity as yet."

## CHAPTER IX.

¶ AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.  
2 And his disciples asked him,

## CHAPTER IX

§ 90. A MAN BORN BLIND—IS HEALED ON THE SABBATH—OUR LORD'S SUBSEQUENT DISCOURSES.—*Jerusalem*.

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
|       |       |       | 9.1-41.  |
|       |       |       | 10.1-21. |

It would seem that the incidents recorded by Luke, in part of chs. 10 and 11, belong to this portion of the history. The return of the seventy is supposed to have occurred at or near Jerusalem, and just preceding the miracle here narrated.

1. *Passed by*. Not necessarily nor probably in His escape from the Jews. ch. 8: 59. This is more like the commencement of a new paragraph; and is such an introduction as marks an ordinary occasion. "As He was going along." ¶ *From his birth*. The man may possibly have been proclaiming the fact of his having been born blind, in order to work upon the sympathy of the passers by—which would account for the disciples asking the question.

2. *Who did sin*. The Jews believed that special calamities were evidences of special sin. The 38th Psalm is founded on the general idea that affliction is the fruit of sin.—In Luke 13: 1-4, our Lord met their mistakes on this subject. It may be said in general terms, that suffering in the world is the fruit of sin. But we have no right, therefore, to count those persons the vilest who suffer the most. It is, indeed, often the very reverse of this, in God's providence. And though some have supposed from their question here, that they thought the man could somehow have sinned *before he was born*, it is not necessary to infer that they had any very definite theory in regard to such a case as this. They asked rather because of a special

saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath

this man sinned, nor his parents, but that<sup>a</sup> the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of

*a c. 11. 4.*

difficulty in this case, growing out of his being *born* with this calamity upon him. Generally, the personal suffering would infer personal sin. But how this man could have been a sinner before he was born, would be the difficulty here. And hence, they inquire whether it could have been visited on account of the parent's sin. This idea they were familiar with in the law, (Exod. 20: 5,) where God declared Himself as "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation, &c."

3. Our Lord takes occasion to correct their mistakes. They had no right to look upon this calamity as a proof of some special sin committed, either by the blind man or by his parents. He further settled the question, (Luke 13: 2,) in the case of "those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell." He did not mean that they were sinless, but that special sin was not to be charged upon them from such evidence as this. This was the cruel error of Job's friends. ¶ *But that, &c.* The sin of the parties was not the procuring cause of this, but it was ordained, in God's works of Providence, for the manifestation of His power and grace. In his blindness, the sovereignty of God was displayed, and in his cure, the mercy of God would be displayed also. This was now the view of the case to which they should give attention. So the sickness of Lazarus was declared by our Lord to be for the glory of God the Son. OBSERVE.—We are not to infer the character of ourselves or others in God's sight, from the outward temporal circumstances. 2. We are to show pity to those who suffer, knowing that often the greatest sufferers are the best of men. 3. If God has sent calamity upon us, we are to regard it as only making occasion,

if we will, to display His power and grace for our deliverance. We are to take it as an invitation to get our necessity relieved by Him. 4. We ought not to complain that we are born sinners and sufferers, when we consider that a Saviour has been sent to us, to deliver from sin and death. 5. Evil in the world is not merely an occasion for God's work of mercy. It is real, and no less real because God has graciously provided a remedy. Because it is so real, and because the curse here and hereafter is so dreadful, He has undertaken to save—has given His only-begotten Son, *that men should not perish*, but have everlasting life.

4. This case fell directly in the way of our Lord's work on earth. He came "not to condemn the Gentile world," as they would do, "but that the world through Him might be saved." And this commission of mercy He must actively execute, during the short time that remained for Him on earth: instead of starting or sanctioning such vain speculations as they suggested. OBSERVE.—We are to employ our time in doing good to men, rather than in speculations about the origin of evil, and about the measure of other people's sin. ¶ *Day.* This refers to His allotted time for laboring on earth. It was limited and short, and now within six months of His death: and while the time lasted He must fulfill His commission and fill up His time with such works as the Father had sent Him to do. ¶ *The night.* See ch. 11: 9, 10. There is probably here some hint of its being the Sabbath. vs. 14. The close of His earthly mission was approaching—and as night closes the labor of the day to all men, and also to Himself, so the end of His day, (of His allotted time,) would bring His earthly labors to a close: and He must occupy Himself, therefore, in glorifying



him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken,

a c. 1. 5, 9; 8: 12; 12. 35, 46.

the Father, and in doing His appointed work. Some understand it rather as meaning, that no man who has not done his work in the day, can do it in the night. Besides there is this, that is peculiar in His case, that not only is His lifetime His day for work, but while His life continues He makes the day for the world. See vs. 5.

5. While He may be said to be under limitation from His approaching death, His day is something more than a mere opportunity for Him to work. It is *daytime* to the world. Therefore all men are eminently interested in His work on earth. Besides He here refers to the prophecy of Himself as "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." This claim He also made. ch. 8: 12. See Ps. 36: 9. The work which He is now about to do—namely, this giving sight to a blind man, is only a hint of what He is able and ready to do, in giving light to the darkened souls of men. See ch. 1: 4; 8: 12. His miracles were *REDEMPTIVE* acts, and they were intended to be *signs* of His complete redemption from sin and death, for men of every class and nation. As this poor blind man, whom they would discard as a grievous and accursed sinner, was to have the cheering light of day from Him, so is He the Sun of righteousness for the world. *OBSERVE*—Our Lord's example teaches us to work while the day lasts—to be living daily in view of death and eternity—and to be burning and shining lights in the world, while we are in it, shedding around us the benefit of good works and a holy example.

6. *Spittle*. Instances are given in which both clay and spittle were used among the ancients for curing the eyes. Our Lord confined Himself to

he<sup>b</sup> spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he<sup>1</sup> anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,<sup>c</sup> (which is,

b Mar. 8. 23. 1 or, *spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man.* c Ne. 3. 15.

no method in working His miraculous cures. It is plain that the healing virtue was not in these applications, any more than in the pool of Siloam. He might have healed him by a word, as in many other cases. But He chose to honor the means by using them. It was not, however, as an aid to Him. He alone could give efficacy to any means. It was rather in this case to minister to the infirmity of the blind man. It was only by the feeling of this anointing upon his eyes, that he would know that the cure came from this his unseen benefactor. It was also perhaps as a help to the weak faith of the man, to feel that something external was doing.—Our Lord deigns to give to us blind sinners some sensible signs, that we may have a livelier apprehension of His healing mercy. Lightfoot shows that the Jews were forbidden to prepare medicines on the Sabbath and even to use spittle for curing the eyes. Our Lord, therefore, may have designed to further train them to the true idea of the Sabbath ordinance. See ch. 7: 22, 23, and notes. *OBSERVE*—Our Lord chose to employ something coming from Himself, to show that the virtue came from Him. He used it also in other cases. Mark 8: 23; 7: 33.

7. *Go wash*. Our Lord would generally put the beginnings of faith to the test, by requiring some act of obedience. It may also have had something to do with the cure. At least, the cure was not to be felt until this command had been obeyed. The blind beggar was familiar enough with the localities about Jerusalem to find his way there, where probably he had often been without a cure.—See the case of Naaman, 2 Kings 5: 10. ¶ *Siloam*,

by interpretation, Sent.) He <sup>a</sup> went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he*.

a 2 Ki. 5. 14.

Josephus describes Siloam as a fountain, and gives its locality as we found it, and in accordance with the scriptural accounts. We had visited the chapel of the Virgin in the valley of Jehoshaphat, near Gethsemane, and thence we passed along the valley and by the fountain of the Virgin, and winding around the point of Ophel, we came to the pool. The structure of the fountain, or reservoir, is a parallelogram in form. The sides are of rude stone work, with fragments of columns set in the wall at intervals, and one broken column, say three feet in height, standing upright in the bed of the pool—the remains probably of a chapel formerly built over the spot. The descent to the bed is by sixteen regular steps, and three or four irregular stones to the water, which we found clear and sweet, deepening along the pebbly slope of its bed to about two feet at the deepest. An archway is in the rock overhead, as of a regular aqueduct, leading under the temple's mount, whence the water flows. We measured the reservoir and found it eighteen feet across and fifty-four feet long. The water from the fountain flowed in a narrow channel along the base of the hill Ophel, some three hundred feet to a basin where the women from the adjacent village of Siloam were washing clothes—and thence it passed to the "King's gardens" of fig trees, &c., in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Some suppose the fountain or pool to be connected with a supply of waters under the temple. This would still add to the significance

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, <sup>b</sup> and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

b ver. 6, 7.

of this transaction. There is a popular tradition of some medicinal virtue in the waters, especially for the *eyes*, but it is very likely to have sprung from a superstitious notion founded on this narrative. ¶ *Sent.* John has given this interpretation, it would seem, to call attention to its meaning as very significant here. This pool was employed in the matter as a symbol of our Lord's mission and work on earth. He was the "*Sent*"—"the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." Heb. 3: 1.—Thus did the eternal "Word," the Son of God, give Light to the blind eyes on the first day of the week—the same Creator who, "in the beginning," had called forth the Light itself on that day. Gen. 1: 3. ¶ *Came seeing.* This was plainly the result of his obedience to Christ, and he was doubtless made to see inwardly that it was more because of his obeying this divine command, than because of any virtue in Siloam. It was the *great Siloam*, opened for sin and for uncleanness, (Zach. 12: 1.) to which he must credit his cure. He returned probably to his own home, as would appear from the next verses. Naaman found nothing but objection to the plan of the prophet to wash in the Jordan; but this man went at the direction of Christ, with a prompt obedience. This was to show in a parable the case of the Jews, who "refused the waters of Siloah that go softly," (Isa. 8: 6,) and were, therefore, destroyed.

8-12. Those who knew him—the neighborhood among whom he had strolled, begging—were prompt to

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them,

He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How <sup>a</sup> can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And <sup>b</sup> there was a division among them.

a ver. 31. c. 3. 2. b c. 7. 12, 43.

notice the change. If we are truly changed by grace, our friends and neighbors will remark the difference in us.

"Great is the work my neighbors cried."

They could scarcely believe it to be the same person. "The opening of the eyes would naturally change the whole countenance." They were inquisitive—would like to know how it was done—while all were talking and speculating about it. So the conversion of a well known person excites remark and starts many inquiries.

13. *The Pharisees.* From the mention of the day as being the Sabbath, (vs. 14,) it would seem that they brought the man before the ecclesiastical rulers. This may have been the lesser local Sanhedrim, which was always sitting. They were not all Pharisees, but the chief were of these—and these were they who would take special notice of any violation of the Sabbath.

14. This fact, that the miracle was done on the Sabbath, is here noted in connection with the tribunal; and the making of the clay is probably mentioned as a species of labor which their law pronounced illegal.

15. *Again.* See vs. 10, where the same question, in substance, had been asked him, by the neighbors—here by "the Pharisees also." ¶ *He put.* The man told what he felt that Christ did to him, and what he knew he himself did, and what they knew was the result.

16. There was a division among the rulers respecting Him. Some took the ground that He was not of God, (not "a teacher sent from God," ch. 3: 3,)

because He kept not the Sabbath day, which was a divine institution. It is true enough that no one who willfully and habitually breaks the Sabbath can be a child of God. But they put their own construction upon what was required in the fourth commandment, and bound every one to the same opinions. The Pharisees were noted for having a multitude of trifling rules about the observance of the day. ¶ *Others.* This was a fair question, but only as yet a question, as if they were timid and doubting. They do not *speak out*, as Nicodemus did—(ch. 3)—"We know that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him." ¶ *Such miracles.* These miracles were before their eyes. They were plain proofs of divine power. Hence, He constantly appealed to His works, in evidence of His being God, and being sent from God, and of His not being a sinner, or deceiver. Miracles were therefore a leading proof of Christianity, in apostolic times. Christianity, as a system, was so connected with miracles, that it is proved to be a divine system by history itself, which is the history of Christianity, as a miraculous system. The miracles were appealed to by the apostles among the chief cities, and were not denied by the bitterest opponents of Christianity, as Julian and Porphyry, who would surely have denied them if they could. And, admitting the miracles to have been wrought, the inference was plainly correct, as Nicodemus declared, and these Pharisees should have yielded to the evidence, as he did. Some, how-

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. <sup>a</sup>

18 But the Jews did not believe <sup>b</sup> concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them and said We know that this is

a c. 4. 19. b Is. 26. 11.

ever, were leaning to this conviction. ¶ *A division.* "For this was He," says Augustine, "who in the beginning divided the Light from the Darkness." See also Matt. 25: 32.

17. *That he hath, &c.* There is but one question here, and not two, as many have understood. The emphasis is on the word "*thou*." Thou, (as the chief witness,) "what sayest thou of him in that, or as to that He hath opened thine eyes?" They hoped that he would possibly bring out something against Him. ¶ *A prophet.* He meant only to give Him the credit of having a commission from God.

18. *The Jews.* These are the rulers, of whom John often speaks as persecuting Christ. They were the hostile party called before—"the Pharisees." They undertake "to sift more closely the evidence of the fact. The parents are summoned as witnesses." ¶ *Did not believe.* These resisted the evidence as long as possible, and chiefly in reference to his having been *born blind*; for which they wanted the parents' testimony. ¶ *Until.* No—nor even then. How reluctant is the natural heart to admit the claims of Christ—though they are established by clearest facts. We see how much they labored to maintain their unbelief—battling against the plainest truths.

19. They seem to have hoped to

our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These words spake his parents, because they <sup>c</sup> feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he <sup>d</sup> should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

e Pr. 19. 25. c. 7. 13; 12. 42. d ver. 34. c. 16. 2.

frighten the parents into some statement more suited to their wish.

20. They state what they know, and what they had the best right to know, but they would not venture upon the matter in dispute as to the healer or the cure, lest they might get in difficulty, with the rulers. ¶ *We know.* "Thus," says Chrysostom, "the truth becomes strengthened by the very snares which are laid against it. A lie is its own antagonist, and by its attempts to injure the truth, sets it off to greater advantage. So was it here. For the point which might have been urged, viz., that the neighbors knew nothing for certain, but spake from a mere resemblance, is cut off by the introduction of the parents, who could, of course, testify to their own son."

21. *He is of age.* They fall back upon the son as of full age, and hence a proper legal witness.

22. *Had agreed.* They had virtually pronounced Christ an impostor, and even while seeming to be hearing the testimony, they would not allow any one to confess Him. ¶ *Put out, &c.* This is expressed by a single term, like *ex-synagoga*. There were different kinds of excommunication. This could scarcely have been the severest kind, which was final, and cut off the man from any intercourse with the people. It was more probably the

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God <sup>a</sup> the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again,

<sup>a</sup> Jos. 7: 19. Ps. 50: 14, 15.

What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples?

28 Then they reviled <sup>b</sup> him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Pe. 2: 23.

first degree, expelling for thirty days from the synagogue, and from coming nearer than four cubits to his wife or friends. But Christ had received this man into His church, while these disbelieving Jews are cut off to this day.

24. *Give God the praise.* The sense might seem to be, "Give the praise (of thy healing) to God. But this man so far from being God, or having any claim to the praise, is a sinner—an impostor." But the phrase is used as a form of adjuration, by which they would oblige the man, on oath, to confess the truth. See Josh. 7: 19; Ezra 10: 11. "We adjure thee by God to confess the truth. We know that this man is a sinner." They wish by this form of "holy inquisition" to awe the man into some account of the cure which would suit their own view. OBSERVE.—They claimed to know beforehand—and yet they call upon the man to tell them the facts, and will be satisfied with no account of the matter but such as will suit their enmity to Christ. So men constantly question nature and science and revelation, to extort answers from them contrary to what they properly give.

25. The man, like one not to be shaken from the truth, confines himself to the facts, and will not be entangled by their questionings. Many a plain Christian, who is met by infidel objections, falls back with confidence upon the consciousness of the truth, as felt in the heart, and says, one thing I know—talk as you will, evil as you may—that I have had inward experience of the truth of religion, and I care

nothing for your vain queries or your skeptical and obstinate doubts, especially where you have your foregone conclusions, and will hear nothing but what will suit your opposition to Christ.

26. They are not satisfied—will not be—but again put the man at the bar to be cross-questioned, so as yet, if possible, to get some clue for accusing Christ—especially, in reference to the Sabbath violation. They hope to hear in his account of the operation, something that shall further serve to condemn Christ as having broken the Sabbath. The question now is, "*what* hath He *done* to thee—*how* opened He thine eyes?"

27. The man seeing their stubborn unbelief, declines to answer them further, when their evident object is not to get at the facts, but to pick flaws, in a spirit of malice. ¶ *Will ye also.* This is an ironical question put to them, as much as to say, you seem so anxious to learn about His work, that you must be wishing to become His followers. OBSERVE.—Many inquire about religious things, merely to raise objections, and though they study the Bible, it would be the greatest satire to charge them with purposing to follow Christ. It is plain that they wish only to bring accusation against Him.

28. The bold confidence of the blind beggar in making this reply, so irritated these inquisitors that they loaded him with abuse. Often a poor helpless Christian has stood up against the frown and threat, and torture, of Papal inquisitions, and in bold confidence of

29 We know <sup>a</sup> that God spake unto Moses: *as for* this fellow, we <sup>b</sup> know not from whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why <sup>c</sup> herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened <sup>d</sup> mine eyes.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 103. 7. He. 3. 5. <sup>b</sup> c. 8. 14. <sup>c</sup> c. 3. 10. <sup>d</sup> Ps. 119. 18. 1s. 29. 18, 19; 35. 5. 2 Cor. 4. 6.

the truth, has uttered Christian convictions, without being shaken, even though anathema and death have been the penalty. ¶ *His disciple.* This is spoken in ridicule. Thou art the disciple or follower of Him—of such an one as this—of *Him*, the pretender—the blasphemer—whom we so despise. In contrast with this, they claim to be the disciples of Moses—putting this honored name, so established among the Jews, against the strange name of this new teacher. They would put the blind beggar, and his teacher and healer, under the same contempt. So they would repel the very thought of seeking to follow Christ. “Be this reproach upon us and upon our children,” says Augustine.

29. *We know.* They claimed for Moses (“in whom they trusted,”) that he had a divine revelation and authority from God, but of this man they had no such evidence. ¶ *Whence.* “We know that Moses was sent by God, and that his doctrine is true and divine. But whether this man be sent by God and be the ambassador of God, we do not know at all.” Why then should we hear Him, and become His disciples?

30. Such contemptuous and reviling language spoken of his great Benefactor, led the healed beggar to speak out for his Lord. ¶ *Why herein.* Literally, *For herein.* The man naturally enough points them to this proof of Christ’s Divinity, which he was so sure of, and which they could not but admit, as they did not deny that He had done it. Hence, he uses the common argument from miracles—that a miracle is a *sign* of the Divine Pres-

31 Now we know that God <sup>e</sup> heareth not sinners: but if <sup>f</sup> any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

<sup>e</sup> Job 27. 9. Ps. 66. 18. Pr. 28. 9. Is. 1. 15. Je. 11. 11. Ez. 8. 18. Mic. 3. 4. Zec. 7. 13. <sup>f</sup> Ps. 34. 15. Pr. 15. 29.

ence and Power—and that whoever really wrought a miracle must be sent from God—that God would not give this power to an impostor, nor set this Divine seal upon an unauthorized message. “This, therefore, is very remarkable, that though this man hath opened my eyes and given such proof of His commission, you do not know whence He is.” Some writers of the present day, as Dr. Arnold, insist that the ground taken by the Sanhedrim was warranted by the passage in Deut. 13: 1-3: only that they failed to distinguish between positive and moral statutes. But the beggar meets their wicked sophistry and cavil on the right ground, viz:—that miracles are evidences of Divine power, and that God would not give the endorsement of His Omnipotence to an imposture.

31-33. This he states as the common sense—the uniform conviction of men, which all may be supposed to admit—that *God heareth not*—attends not to—acts not in concert with—*sinners*—impostors. Therefore, they cannot do works which require divine power and show divine goodness. God will give them no such seal or token of His favor. ¶ *But.* God strictly distinguishes characters—separates the precious from the vile. He gives no countenance to the works of the wicked. But the humble worshiper and follower of God He heareth. The tokens of His presence are, of course, confined to these. Hence, if this man were not sent from God, He could do nothing of *this kind*.

32. Though the prophets of old had wrought many miracles, none had ever wrought one like this. The prophet

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou <sup>a</sup> wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they <sup>1</sup> cast him <sup>b</sup> out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had

found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe <sup>c</sup> on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and <sup>d</sup> it is he that talketh with thee.

a ver. 2. 1 or, excommunicated him. b Is. 66. 5.

c 1 Jno. 5. 13. d c. 4. 26.

Elijah had, indeed, raised the dead. But this opening of the blind eyes was particularly ascribed to the Messiah by the prophets, (Isa. 35: 5; 42: 7,) and the Jewish Rabbins believed and taught that Christ, when he came, would work this particular miracle. The beggar may not have referred to the prophecies, but only to the fact, that this particular miracle which was confessed to be so great, had not been wrought. Yet it was calculated to force conviction upon these obstinate Jews.

34. *Altogether.* They mean to charge him now with being a sinner from his birth, and marked as such by his being born blind. They had asked our Lord whether it was this man or his parents that had sinned so as to stamp him with this token of the divine displeasure. But now they charge it upon the man himself, though they had pretended not to believe that he had been born blind. vs. 19. ¶ *Teach us.* Their pride was in very striking contrast with his simplicity and sincerity. They were proud pretenders, (Rom. 2: 19, 20,) and could not bear the thought of being schooled by this "blind beggar." Bt, says Augustine, "it was they themselves who had made him the teacher, by asking him so many questions." ¶ *Cast him out.* This was according to their threatening. vs. 22. They regarded him now, by his defence of Christ from their revilings, as professing Him, and they excommunicated him as not fit to have the privileges of the Jewish church.

35. How tenderly does our Lord show His interest in this honest oppressed beggar whom He had healed. Calvin says, "We have known the same thing

in our own time; for, when Dr. Martin Luther and others of the same class were beginning to reprove the grosser abuses of the Pope, they scarcely had the slightest relish for pure Christianity. But, after the Pope had cast them out of the Roman synagogue by terrific bulls, Christ stretched out his hand and made Himself fully known to them."

¶ *Dost thou believe.* This was as much as to say, Do you, after all this experience of the Jewish teachers, and of this wonder-worker, believe, notwithstanding the unbelief of the rulers? He had recognized this healer as sent from God, but he had not yet come to think of Him under this title of *Son of God*—perhaps not even as the Messiah. Indeed, they knew of the Messiah rather under the name of "Son of David."

36. The man shows his inquiring disposition and readiness to receive the truth. He had not seen his Benefactor, when the miracle was wrought; and now perhaps it occurs to him from this inquiry, that the Great Healer and the Son of God were one and the same. If so, this would increase the interest of his inquiry, "Who is he?" See Mark 10: 26; Luke 10: 29; 2 Cor. 2: 2. ¶ *That I may.* "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," &c. Rom. 10: 17. The willingness to believe—the believing spirit is met by a sufficient communication of the truth. "Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord." He was ready to believe in Jesus whatever He might say.

37. This does not refer to any former sight of Him, but the reference to his restored sight serves to awaken the

38 And he said, Lord, I believe.  
 \* And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, For <sup>b</sup> judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not <sup>c</sup> might see, and that

a Matt. 14. 33. b c. 5. 22. 27; 12. 47. c 1 Pe. 2. 9.

they which see might be made blind. <sup>d</sup>

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we <sup>e</sup> blind also?

d Matt. 13. 13. c. 3. 19. e Ro. 2. 19. Re. 3. 17.

man's gratitude. In this way He discovers Himself to him as He who had given him sight. This poor witness to the truth—cast out from the temple—comes to be the gainer, as he was received by the Lord of the Temple. See Luke 2: 30. Jesus intended to be acknowledged by him as the Christ, (and to this the man was gradually, graciously led along,) that from this beginning of faith in His person and office work, He might afterwards lead him forward to a more intimate knowledge of Himself.

38. The man was brought now to profess his faith in Christ, as the very living Healer who stood before him. He had found now a Personal Saviour. Like Thomas, he could now say, "My Lord and my God." John 20: 28. ¶ *Worshipped*. This term means literally to bow the knee in reverence. As soon as he recognized Christ, he adored. When we apprehend Christ by a living faith, we must pay Him the homage of our hearts. This is the order in which "*effectual calling*" works—"enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, the Holy Spirit doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel."

39. *For judgment*. Our Lord now explains His mission, in connection with such cases as this. His fan is in His hand. He goes through the world thoroughly purging His floor, gathering His wheat, and separating from it the chaff—(Matt. 3: 12)—dividing the light from the darkness. This process is constantly going on; and an instance had just occurred which would illustrate it. This blind beggar was *spiritually blind* also from his birth. But he had been found by Christ, the Great

Healer, and he had received both bodily and spiritual eye-sight. Christ had revealed Himself to him as the Son of God—the true Messiah—and he had embraced Him as such a personal Saviour for his own case. And though Christ came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, (Matt. 18: 11,) there were always those who would not receive His healing, and must perish in their blindness. ¶ *See not*. His gracious object is to give recovering of sight to the blind, where one is sensible of the blindness, or would rejoice in His office-work as a giver of sight. ¶ *Who see*. This is a result naturally growing out of Christ's work. He came not to call the righteous. Hence the self-righteous cut themselves off from His benefits. They who claim to see without His healing agency, put themselves outside of the circle whom He would relieve and save. ¶ *Be made blind*. Literally, *Become blind*. This blinding of the self-sufficient occurs either 1. from His making them feel their blindness, which He sometimes does in His infinite grace, but does not bind Himself to do: *e.g.* Saul of Tarsus: or 2. from His giving them over to their blindness—to remain unhealed: or 3. from His visiting upon them a judicial blindness as the proper desert of their rejection of His grace: or 4. from the natural darkening and hardening which increases so through unbelief. Isa. 6: 9, 10; Rom. 11: 7-10. This last is the prevailing idea.

40. They are indignant, and wish to know if He means to class them with the blind, that He speaks of—for they perceive that He means a blindness of the mind and heart.



41 Jesus said unto them, If <sup>a</sup> ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see: therefore <sup>b</sup> your sin remaineth.

a c. 15, 22, 24. b 18, 5, 21. Lu. 18, 14. 1 Jno. 1, 8-10.

41. Calvin paraphrases this—"If you would acknowledge your disease, it would not be altogether incurable, but now because you think you are in perfect health you continue in a desperate state." ¶ *Were blind.* It might mean, If ye were really blind—without knowledge of the truth. "If I had not come and spoken to you, you had not had sin." Ch. 15: 22. But the connection points rather to the other idea. If ye confessed yourselves blind, and were in this attitude ready to be healed, and to receive sight, your sin would not be chargeable upon you, and especially it would not *remain* upon you. It would be removed. But now ye claim to have sight, and boast that you see, therefore you put yourselves outside of the circle of those whom I come to heal, and you are left to your blindness—your sin remaineth—your blindness of mind is unremoved—you perish in your sins. They who are anxious to be delivered will always find the Great Deliverer at hand, ready to hear their prayer. But they who deny their sin and lost condition, deny themselves the only salvation. To whomsoever the Gospel is *glad tidings*, to them alone it is the Gospel. ¶ *We see.* This was the great difficulty—their self-sufficient spirit, full of boasting and pretension—which would keep them from seeking Christ, or from appreciating what He had to bestow. ¶ *Therefore.* On this account. The result was no arbitrary act of God. It was a natural result of their unbelief and willful rejection of an offered Saviour. They said in their hearts, we have no need of sight—we see—we are not in darkness—we ask no enlightening such as He can give. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Ch. 3: 19.

## CHAPTER X.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, <sup>c</sup> He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold,

c Ro. 10, 15. He. 5, 4.

Men's sins might be taken away—they need not remain upon them—Christ's power and grace are all-sufficient. The lost will have their own pride and self-righteousness to blame, and they will forever reproach themselves with having willfully rejected the light. OBSERVE—Christ is the *eye-salve* for blind human nature, with which, if men will but anoint their eyes, they shall see. To this Christ invites men. Rev. 3: 18.

## CHAPTER X.

Our Lord had claimed to be "the Light of the world," as Teacher, Leader and Guide of men, and the only true Light of His people. He would vindicate His claim, against those false guides who rejected and calumniated Him. At the same time, as He has set His ministers to be "a Light unto the Gentiles," (Acts. 13: 45-47,) He would set forth, for His church, their distinguishing marks, so that they may be known in distinction from the false prophets, and wolves, and hirelings, which have always been ready to destroy the flock. This discourse of our Lord stands closely connected with the preceding narrative. He had just charged upon the Jewish teachers and leaders, that they were "blind leaders of the blind," who, instead of coming to Him to have their eyes opened, were quarreling with Him for giving sight to a blind beggar. He takes this occasion to expose their hypocrisy and to set forth His own true character and relations, as a leader and teacher of men. 1. He is a shepherd and has His flock. 2. He is a *good* shepherd. 3. He is the shepherd. 4. He is *the good* shepherd. 5. He is also the only *way* of other shepherds, so that none can be authorized who do not enter by Him at the *door*. All who reject Him, avoid the *door*, and are to be regarded as thieves and rob-

but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the <sup>a</sup> door is the shepherd of the sheep.

a ver. 7, 9.

bers. Those who do not receive Christ as the only way of salvation—who do not preach Christ as the only hope of men—who stand between Christ and the sinner, or otherwise block up the entrance through which alone both shepherd and sheep must get in to the fold—they are *thieves* who would steal the flock—*hirelings* who care not for the flock—*wolves* who devour the flock. See Jer. 23: 1-4; Ezek. 34; Zech. 11: 4-17: where Christ was predicted under the figure of a shepherd, and where faithless pastors are also spoken of as here.

1. *By the door.* This, first of all, sets forth the case of those claiming to be leaders and guides of the people, who reject Christ and deny His claims as the Messiah and only Saviour. They, like these scribes and Pharisees, enter not by the door into the fold. And in a country abounding in flocks as Palestine, all would understand such characters. The fold is a large enclosure, sometimes walled around, and commonly uncovered at the top, and having but a *single door*. Our Lord means, also, to show the proper marks of His true Pastors, the faithful under-shepherds, as distinguished from the interlopers, and false prophets, the wolves in sheep's clothing and the hirelings who destroy the flock—that the church in all time may distinguish them by these marks. Always, in all ages of the church, there would be danger of rejecting the true shepherds, and receiving the false. So it occurred in the early church—as Acts 13: 45-47, where it appears that His ministers are given to be lights in the world, after His ascension. He therefore vindicates both their claim and His own, as the true lights and the true shepherds. Those of course who undertook to climb over into the fold instead of going in at the door, are not the shepherds of

3 To him <sup>b</sup> the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth <sup>c</sup> his own sheep by name, and leadeth <sup>d</sup> them out.

b Re. 3, 20. c Eze. 31. 11. Ro. 8, 30. d Is. 40. 11.

the flock, but robbers of the fold. This will apply also to the sheep. As there is but one and the same door for both, the sheep cannot enter by any other than "the living way." They whose aim is to steal the sheep, will be found not going in and out at the door of the fold, but climbing over the wall, or in at a window, or opening of some kind. ¶ *Thief.* One who secretly takes away another's property. ¶ *Robber.* Is one who *also* kills, who is, like Barabbas, a murderer, as well as a thief—committing bloody violence and taking life. Such forewarning our Lord gives, that we may see to it that we be not deceived by the subtlety of those who, while they pretend to be shepherds of the flock, are destroyers of souls.

2. The one who enters in by the door—who goes in and out before the flock by the one appointed entrance, is a proper and true shepherd. ¶ *The shepherd.* Rather—a *shepherd*. He is yet speaking in general terms, and means only as yet, to describe a shepherd as different from a robber. You may know a shepherd by this, that he enters into the fold by the door, and does not climb up some other way.

3. *To him.* This one is recognized as a shepherd, and not a robber, and he is admitted by the *porter*, or door-keeper. The meaning is, that whoever is authorized to keep the door of the flock, freely admits such an one as comes in, by this only true way; while, as a proper watchman and guardian of the flock, he would endeavor to keep out all who climb up some other way. The fold is the church—His people are the flock. The proper officers of the church who hold the keys—opening and shutting—are charged to admit such—while their business is to exclude others. Some take the porter to represent rather the

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them,

and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ca. 2. 8; 5. 2.

Holy Spirit. In countries such as Palestine, where the keeping of flocks was the chief business of the people, some large folds had *keepers* besides the shepherds, to take care of the enclosure, when the shepherd was away with the flocks among the pastures; though, originally, the owner was the shepherd of his own flock. And the Holy Spirit's office is sometimes noticed as that of opening the door to the shepherds. Acts 14: 27; 1 Cor. 16: 9; 2 Cor. 2: 12; Col. 4: 3. Compare Rev. 3: 7; Acts 16: 14. So also of shutting the door. Acts 16: 6, 7. Men of the world often open the door to such ministers as the Spirit does not approve. Therefore, it is always of great importance to know to whom the *porter* openeth. The door-keeper is regarded by others as referring to the servant of the shepherd, or owner of the flock. ¶ *Hear his voice.* That is, as the shepherd *calls*, they *hear*—when he commands, they obey. It is a well-known fact, that the sheep of a flock become familiar with the voice of their shepherd, and know his call. This is used as well representing the familiarity of Christ's people with His word, and their obedience to His command, as that of their good shepherd. This He applies, vs. 26, 27. ¶ *His own sheep.* He is the proprietor-shepherd—the owner of the flock. The sheep are His own—not another's. He is not tending another's flock for wages as an hireling. But He sustains toward them a close relation as their proprietor and keeper. This is the only kind of shepherd here spoken of, and the only kind that sets forth the shepherd office of Christ. Psalm 23. In the East it is not uncommon for shepherds to have names for certain leaders of the flock by which he calls them, and the rest follow. Our Lord calls all of His flock *by name*. The tenderest relations and offices of the shepherd are touched upon in this parable as representing the gracious

office work of Christ as personally our shepherd. By this is shown the intimate familiarity which Christ has with every case—knowing our personal wants. So he called to the penitent unbeliever among the twelve “Thomas,” in reply to his confession, “My Lord and my God.” ch. 20: 29. So He called “Mary” by name, when He discovered Himself to her seeking and anxious soul at the sepulchre. 20: 16. So also He calleth all the stars by their names. Ps. 147: 4. ¶ *Leadeth them out.* By green pastures and still waters. Ps. 23. All these offices of a good shepherd represent not only Christ's office work eminently, as having in perfection every quality which the best, besides, have only imperfectly—but they also indicate the proper traits of true pastors who lead the flock according to Christ as the chief shepherd and the door. A faithful pastor will know his people, show a personal interest in them, make them familiar with his voice as a leader and teacher—and he will lead them out by his earnest instructions in every duty—setting them also a good and true example which they can safely follow.

4. *Putteth forth.* A faithful pastor like a true shepherd, will not be content to meet his flock merely in the fold, or to deal with them in the church alone, but will put them forth in Christian walks and ways of active duty. ¶ *Goeth before them.* This is the practice, in the East especially. The shepherd goes in front of the flock instead of driving them, and sometimes we have seen him pick up one or two of the tender lambs, who were growing overwheated in the way, and carry them in his arms. This also would incite the sheep to follow. ¶ *For.* The reason here given for their prompt following is their knowledge of his voice—“In the sheep of Christ, a knowledge of the truth goes before, and then follows an earnest desire to obey.”—*Calvin*. So a true pastor puts

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee <sup>a</sup> from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not

<sup>a</sup> 2 Ti. 3, 5. Re. 2, 2.

himself forward as an example of piety and Christian activity, in front of his flock; and just as shepherds tended the sheep day and night, so a pastor's attentions and exertions for their good and for bringing them out of the fold, to all activity and Christian enterprise, are untiring. Christ walked *before* His disciples where danger was to be encountered. Ch. 18: 4, 8; Mark 10: 32.

5. *A stranger.* This is the mock-shepherd, who is really a thief and a robber. No flock would be found to follow a *stranger* as they followed their well-known shepherd. So the sheep of Christ, (whom He faithfully tends by under-shepherds,) will not go after false teachers, such as constantly come along to lead them astray. They will discriminate. They will demand the marks of a true shepherd in those whom they follow. They will require such as lead into *the fold* by Christ who is the door. ¶ *Will flee*, &c. They will even avoid such as make pretensions which are derogatory to the claims of simple Christian pastors, who pretend to teach more excellent ways than those of the gospel, or who wander about to lead off the flock by some novel doctrine or measures. Christians who are Christ's sheep, generally show a careful discrimination, and avoid running after the more popular declaimers, who do not preach the doctrines of Christ and are strangers to the truth as it is in Jesus. The pastoral relation is tender, intimate, confidential, sacred. Pastor and people are bound together by the most endearing ties. The pastor knows the people's case, counsels them in perplexity—comforts them in sorrow—sympathizes with them in affliction—knows their perils and warns them, and watches for their souls as one who

what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I <sup>b</sup> am the door of the sheep.

<sup>b</sup> Ep. 2, 18.

must give account. This is the care that Christ's churches need—the proper pastoral care—and no other arrangement in the church of Christ, can possibly compensate for the lack of this office. It was instituted by Christ, and is here commended by Him, as for the highest good of His church and people. Wandering from church to church—running after every new preacher—or having only such care as strangers can give, will not satisfy the sheep of Christ's flock. Least of all will they follow those whose voice they do not know from the word of God, and who broach their new, strange theories to delude and destroy the unwary.

6. *Parable.* The term here means not properly parable—but *allegory*—there being no narrative here as in parables. A similar instance is ch. 15: 1, &c. ¶ *They understood not.* That is, they did not understand the meaning of this representation—they did not see what He meant to teach by this illustration. Therefore He explains to them in the following verses, as He did not do on other occasions, except to His own disciples in private.

7. *Verily.* He introduces the explanation by this solemn form to call attention to the truth of what He has to say. The great truth which He would urge by this pictorial representation, is His own relation to both sheep and shepherds. ¶ *The door.* “Christ is both the door and the shepherd and everything. No one else can suffice.”—*Bengel.* He is the door of the sheep. None can enter into His true church, or belong to His spiritual fold, or be one of *His own* sheep, unless entering in by Him—as the only way of access—as the strait gate, (ch. 7: 14,) “the new and living way

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

which He hath opened for us," (Heb. 10: 20,) by His atonement—His merits—His intercession: "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ephes. 2: 18. OBSERVE.—It is the knowledge of Christ's voice, which makes them detect that of the stranger by its difference from His.

8. *Came before me.* This has no reference to the teachers of the Old Dispensation. He had vindicated them in a previous discourse, (ch. 8,) as having come by Christ—such as Abraham, &c. And these Scribes and Pharisees He had carefully distinguished from them. Some refer this to these Jewish teachers, not as belonging to Abraham and the prophets, (for *they* had come by Christ, ch. 8: 56,) but as belonging to their father the devil, who first attempted to lead human nature, before the dispensation of grace began. Another view is taken by Dr. Brown in his "Discourses." "*Before me*—putting themselves as it were between me and mankind, and thus placing themselves above me, taking the precedence of me. All who, admitted by the porter, pass through me, the door, into the fold are genuine shepherds. All who 'ever came before me,' blocking up the door, rather than passing through it, and, rather than keeping the way into the fold open, by leading the sheep in and out of it—they are thieves and robbers. Every man—pretend what he may—who does not practically acknowledge Christ's authority in obtaining and exercising ecclesiastical office—who looks no farther than the ordination of a prelate or presbytery, who is satisfied with a mere human authority and call—civil or ecclesiastical—he is not a shepherd of the sheep, be he called pope, patriarch, or bishop, rabbi, reverend, master, or doctor."—*Brown.* This was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees, and has been the case with very many since, who have pretended to be Christian teachers and pastors, but are spoilers of the

9 I am the door: by me if any

flock. ¶ *Are.* This is their essential nature in all circumstances, so that the description will suit all times of the church's history. They who "devoured widow's houses," and made the Father's house a house of *merchandise*, and a *den of thieves*, were such false pastors. ¶ *Thieves and robbers.* See Jer. 23: 1; Ezek. 34: 2-4. In verse 1, He had said that all who *enter not by the door* are "thieves and robbers," and here He says, that He is the door, and that all *who ever came before Him* are "thieves and robbers." This would seem to fix the meaning of the opening clause in vs. 8, for it shows that by those who *come before Him* (the door) must be meant those who climb up some other way, and enter not by the door; and, in so far, they make another way of entrance, discarding Christ and His claims. ¶ *But the sheep.* Such false pastors are blind leaders of the blind. They make a class for themselves. They are not followed by the sheep. It is not the character of the sheep to obey and go after such. But a *false flock* follow such *false shepherds*. The sheep do not hear such, *so as to follow them.*

9. *The door.* In vs. 7 He called Himself the door of the sheep, but He is also the door of the shepherd, as it is one door, and *only one*, for both. ¶ *By me, &c.* Here He expresses in general terms the saving benefit to all, whether shepherd or sheep, of entering into the fold, or church, *by Him*—making Him the way, the truth and the life. ¶ *Shall be saved.* "Neither is there salvation in any other." Acts 4: 12. This is stated generally, because if it be the only way of salvation to the individual, it is the only way to be preached, and the shepherd could not adopt any other way for himself, with safety. ¶ *Go in and out.* This expresses the course of living—the daily habitual walk of life. It is as much as to say, "He shall walk securely, and shall habitually find nourishment and provision such as the

man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that

they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

11 I <sup>a</sup> am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

a He. 13. 20. 1 Pe. 2. 25.

flock require." *Pasture* is the food of the flock, and Christ giveth those who enter by Him "all things pertaining to life and godliness." But this can be had only by virtue of their relation to Him—whether it be shepherd or sheep—pastor or people. Hence, if any suppose it is a particular church relation, or the virtue of any office or service in the church, that secures to them salvation, it is here said to be only by making Christ the door into the fold. Not sacraments, nor professions, nor denominations, nor any thing, can serve as the door, in any way to dispense with Christ as the only proper and true entrance. Every other way is the way of thieves and robbers. Calvin explains—"First, they shall go safely wherever they find necessary, and next they shall be fed to the full." OBSERVE—No pastor who does not go in and out at Christ as the door, doing every thing through Him, as the way and the truth and the life, can find pasture for his flock. They must starve by any other preaching than that of the glorious Gospel. No matter how learned or elegant be the weekly discourses, they must prove as husks which swine do eat, for the soul's wants. The true pastor who enters by Christ, and so leads his sheep, finds the green pastures. The promise to such is "Lo, I am with you alway."

10. *The thief.* Our Lord here passes to mark the difference between Him as the shepherd, and the thief as the plunderer and spoiler of the flock. Surely one who avoids entering in by the door (made for the purpose,) can have no good design. He must have it for his object, to kill, steal and destroy. So the false pastors can have no other motive but to do injury, to pervert and ruin the souls of men—to reason away

the soul's chief hope for time and eternity—and to encourage some false expectations that shall surely perish. How entire is the contrast with Christ's object. Calvin says, "Christ *pulls cur ear* that the ministers of Satan may not come upon us by surprise. Our insatiable curiosity is so delighted with the new and strange inventions of men, that of our own accord, we rush with mad career to meet thieves and wolves." See Col. 2: 8. ¶ *I am come.* As the shepherd, Christ has the gracious object, to *give life*, (instead of to kill and to destroy,) and to give it without stint, to His people. Ch. 5: 24. ¶ *More abundantly.* Literally—might have *abundance*. He not only provides by His atonement for salvation from death, but for exaltation to everlasting blessedness. He not only protects from the wolf and from the lion, but He conducts to Heaven itself every one of his own sheep. It is not only giving them life such as they would have merited by their perfect righteousness, but it is such as He has merited by His sufferings and by His perfect obedience. It is life eternal, (vs. 28,) life in the fullest measure.

11. *The good shepherd.* It is not enough that He is the door and the only door. This does not express all His relations to the flock—only the beginning of them. He is *the* chief shepherd of all under shepherds—and the good shepherd whose offices are full of grace and love and truth. He is the opposite of the thief and hireling. Isa. 40: 9-11; Ezek. 34: 11-24. "I am the divinely-qualified, the divinely-commissioned, the divinely-accredited, the divine Saviour, promised to the fathers."—*Brown*. Our Lord here gives further illustration of His office-work, as represented by that

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf

coming, and leaveth <sup>a</sup> the sheep, and fleeth : and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

a Eze. 34. 2-6. Zec. 11. 17.

of the shepherd. It is beautifully expressed in general in Psalm 23. It is brought out in this connexion more in detail. He is the good shepherd "as *giving life* to the sheep—and *more*, or beyond that—the highest style of life and blessedness, also—as doing this at the greatest conceivable expense to Himself—also, as preserving the most intimate and endearing mutual acquaintance and intercourse between Him and His people, and as securing the salvation of them all."—*Brown*.

¶ *Giveth his life.* Our Lord's object was to set forth His own qualities and offices as the eminently good shepherd—the Pattern and Head of all good pastors, and the great opponent of false pastors. The general truth here declared is, that instead of despoiling the sheep, as the false pastor does, the faithful pastor devotes his life to the sheep, and gives his life for the sheep. Here, however, He intimates His own special, vicarious sacrifice, which He clearly states in vs. 15. Here He sets to pastors a bright example of large-hearted devotedness as opposed to every thing narrow, secular and mercenary. By this example He exhorts all such to take the oversight of the flock, "*not for filthy lucre*," (1 Pet. 5: 2,) seeking not theirs, but them. 2 Cor. 12: 14.

12. The false pastors are characterized more definitely as *hirelings*.—"He that is an hireling and not a shepherd." Here is a general truth, full, however, of application, as will appear in the following verses. The flocks of the East were tended at first by their owners, and their families. At times, however, men needed to be hired for the purpose. Some of these were mere hirelings. They had no interest in the flock, but only in their own wages. They were hirelings and not shepherds. Many false pastors are most aptly described under this figure: being not so

much thieves and robbers, as mercenaries—preaching only for popularity or pay, and not devoting themselves to the care of souls—flying at any danger—avoiding any self-denial, unwilling to sacrifice their lives or even their ease, popularity or living, or even to devote their time and energies to the welfare of the flock. The Epistles abound in warnings against a mercenary spirit in God's ministers. Yet they equally inculcate the duty of a people to be liberal in their temporal things to those who minister to them in spiritual things. A narrow, illiberal dealing with the pastor often provokes a close calculating spirit, and drives him into secularities. The form of the *call* which a people extend to a pastor, therefore recognizes this idea, in some such terms as these, "*that you may be free from worldly cares and embarrassments*, we promise to pay you," &c. As Christ Himself is both the door and the shepherd, and the good shepherd, so the faithless pastors are thieves and robbers, and hirelings and wolves.

¶ *Whose own.* The great difference between the good shepherd and these, is, that He tends a flock which is *His own*. OBSERVE.—Gradually He unfolds this precious idea, and all along, it *shines out through* the figure, until it is brought most clearly to view in vs. 14 and 15. 1. It is the great encouragement of God's people that "the good shepherd," has His flock, ("Fear not little flock," &c.) and that these sheep are "*His own*"—His property—His purchase—His inheritance. Ephes. 1: 18. The redemption must be particular and personal, to be effectual. We need to recognize Christ as our own Saviour in order to receive the full satisfaction. Like Thomas, we feel our unbelief overcome when we can say, "My Lord, and my God." OBSERVE.—2. Many object that Christ should have his own sheep, that He

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and

<sup>a</sup> know my *sheep*, and am known <sup>b</sup> of mine.

15 As <sup>c</sup> the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and

<sup>a</sup> 2 Tim. 2: 19. <sup>b</sup> 1 John 5: 20. <sup>c</sup> Matt. 11: 27.

should have His chosen, His people, His elect. But this would rather make Him to be a *hireling* in this particular, "*whose own the sheep are not.*" ¶ *The wolf.* The idea is that the false shepherd is good for nothing in time of danger, while the good shepherd shows his entire self-sacrifice, laying down his life. The hireling, with whom the good shepherd is contrasted, "flies even when the enemy is seen in the distance, and before the battle is begun."—*Tholuck.* ¶ *The wolf.* The wolf is the foe of the flock—the secret plunderer of the fold. *False prophets*, "who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves," may be meant—or any other great enemies of God's people. Matt. 7: 15. These Scribes and Pharisees, as false pastors of the people, were mere hirelings, laboring only to subserve their own interest, and leaving the sheep to the dangers of every foe. And the result is natural—the wolf seizes the sheep and scatters the flock. How fearfully God's church had suffered by their mercenary, unfaithful conduct.

13. This statement explains itself. The difference between Christ and every false pastor, grows out of their different feeling for, and interest in the flock. If Christ cared not for His people, in their perils and straits, what would be their case? He would show us what *He is not*, as well as *what He is*—to assure us most perfectly of His caring for us, that so upon this assurance, we may cast all our cares upon Him. 1 Pet. 5: 7.

14. *Know my sheep.* This expresses the tender, personal interest He has in them, and in each of them. How different from the hireling who careth not for the flock. Christ distinguishes them from others—and each of them from every other, knowing all the peculiar wants of each—and so also

He owns them as His—setting this seal upon the foundations of His church, and of His throne. 2 Tim. 2: 19. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." ¶ *Am known.* This personal knowledge is mutual. They distinguish Christ from all others—and He is to them a personal Saviour, so that they say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." They are intimate with Him—having their fellowship with Him, they hear and they follow Him. And even more than this—the mutual knowledge is likened to that mutual knowledge which exists between the Father and the Son. OBSERVE—*First*, Christ knows us, *then* we know Him.

15. This verse connects immediately with the foregoing, thus—"I know my sheep, and am known of mine, *as the Father* knoweth me, and I know the Father." Wonderful as it seems, the mutual knowledge of Christ and His people is like that of the Father and the Son. His knowledge of us is "entire, perfect, all-comprehensive." Our knowledge of Him is "intimate, direct and personal," with a holy, inseparable love. "This knowledge is just as inward as that by which Christ knows the Father. It has in it both life and love."—*Tholuck.* "There is as really a peculiar, mutual knowledge and acknowledgment between the Good Shepherd and his sheep as between the Father and the Son, and it has the same character of complacency and affection."—*Brown.* ¶ *I lay down.* Now He declares of Himself what He had said already of the Good Shepherd (vs. 11.)—showing that by the Good Shepherd, He meant Himself. He came on earth to offer Himself up as an atoning, vicarious sacrifice for His people. He gave Himself for them (Titus 2: 14.)—was made a curse for them, and died in *their stead*, to redeem them from sin and death and hell. This is



\* I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And <sup>b</sup> other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them

a c. 15. 13. Is. 53. 4, 5. b Is. 49. 6; 56. 8.

the perfection of love. "Greater love hath no man than this," &c.

16. Our Lord's shepherd-office and care extend also to other sheep of His, besides those of His ancient people. He refers to the Gentiles. His church was at first confined to the Jewish fold. But He remembered the multitudes of all tribes and tongues that were given to Him in the covenant of redemption. Isa. 53. 11. In this sense, they were *already His*—for all that the Father gave Him should come to Him. The prophets had foretold of the Gentiles coming to the Messiah. The Psalmist had sung of "the kings of Tarshish and of the Isles—yea, all kings—all nations," as flocking to Him with presents and service; and of the uttermost ends of the earth as being His possession, to be entered upon whenever He should ask. Pss. 72 and 2.

¶ *Not of this fold.* They were scattered among the nations—needing to be brought in—and He would gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Matt. 8: 11. ¶ *I must bring.* The term here rendered *must*, is used by the Evangelists to express that necessity that is founded in the Divine purpose. These scattered sheep were His, given Him of the Father in the Covenant of Redemption, and His office was to bring them in, by His word and Spirit, through His messengers in all times. In 1 Pet. 5: 2, 3; Acts 20: 28, the use of the term "flock" is seen, as meaning God's heritage—peculiar people—the church of God. Ez. 34: 31. *He must bring them.* The necessity is such as lies in the plan of grace. Christ gathers in His elect through His ministers, and by His Spirit. The apostles "went forth and preached, THE LORD working with them," (Mark 16: 20) and the "Acts of the Apostles" is rather the History of our Risen Lord, in His active work which He carried on upon earth

also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and <sup>c</sup> there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

c Eze. 37. 22. Ep. 2. 14.

through His apostles. At Pentecost they say, "He hath shed forth this," &c. Acts 2: 33. ¶ *Hear my voice.* He will bring them in, in no way that shall dispense with their willing and cheerful obedience. He will not force them against their will, but will sweetly constrain their will, so that they shall hear and obey. Even the most unwilling shall thus be made to consent to His service, wherever He shall do the almighty work upon the heart. It shall not be by any natural disposition to obedience in any, but by His power and grace bringing, leading them in, through His office work, as the gentle Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Christ's work, therefore, so far from making our obedience unnecessary, accounts it most necessary, and secures it. ¶ *One fold.* The term here rendered *fold*, means *flock*, and is altogether different from the term rendered "fold" in the context. The meaning is, then, not that there shall be one exclusive inclosure—any one denominational pale, to which all shall be brought in—but that from Jews and Gentiles there shall be ONE FLOCK, comprising all His own sheep—no one should be overlooked or lost, and no one neglected, but all should be united under Him, as their Shepherd and Head, enjoying His protection, care and government, and embracing Him in the fellowship of Gospel blessings. This idea was repugnant to the Jews. Yet this accession of the Gentiles and the universal character of the Christian church, as embracing people of all nations, was often foretold by the prophets, more or less clearly, and now was definitely predicted by our Lord Himself. The prediction soon began its accomplishment, and has been gloriously fulfilled in the ingathering of millions of Gentiles to the flock of Christ. See Matt. 21: 43; Mark 13: 10, where our Lord had already signi-

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because <sup>a</sup> I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me,

<sup>a</sup> 1s. 53. 7-12. He. 2. 9.

fied that the heathen should be made partakers of His grace. See ch. 4: 21. OBSERVE—1. The conversion of men is according to a Divine plan. The Shepherd has His sheep. 2. This plan is not such as ever to make their obedience unnecessary, but rather to secure their obedience, as it could be done in no other way. 3. How blessed that unity in Christ which is better than any uniformity.

17. *Therefore.* These remarkable words show us something of the secret of the eternal counsels of love, as if the Father, if possible, had a more special love for the Son on account of His undertaking for men's redemption. ¶ *Because.* It was because He laid down His life, with this definite purpose of redemption—in a way to secure such glorious results—because He laid it down, (1) *voluntarily*, (2) vicariously, (3) triumphantly—in order that He might rise from the dead, having succeeded in His expiating work, and having procured the end for which He suffered—the salvation of such multitudes, by His accepted ransom. It was because He was voluntarily delivered for our offences in order that He might be raised again for our justification. See Phil. 2: 5-11. It was because He condescended to this work of humiliation with a view to this glorious redemption. "Without such a purpose in view, the death of Christ would neither be lawful nor possible." Hence, His glorification commenced with His resurrection. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. Rom. 1: 4.

18. He proceeds further to insist upon the *voluntariness* of His coming death. When He should be crucified by violent hands, it might seem that it was because He could not prevent

it. But He lays it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I <sup>c</sup> have power to take it again. This <sup>d</sup> commandment have I received of my Father.

<sup>b</sup> Ph. 2. 6-8. <sup>c</sup> c. 2. 19. <sup>d</sup> c. 6. 38.

it. But He tells them beforehand, that it was all of His own purpose and will. He showed this plainly at the garden, when His word, "I am He," brought the traitors to the ground, (ch. 18: 6,) and when at the presence of His angels rolling away the stone from the sepulchre with a great earthquake, the Roman guards fell as dead men. He also often escaped out of the hand of the Pharisees in a way that showed how easy it was for Him to avoid death. He could have prayed His Father, and obtained twelve legions of angels. Matt. 26: 53. And in the garden He showed His submission to death as the will of the Father, and did not pray to be delivered from it, if the Father required it, as He knew was the case. On the cross, indeed, He showed the same. Luke 23: 46. ¶ *I have power.* The term here rendered *power*, means sometimes *authority*. In this sense, it would signify that He acted under the appointment or commandment of the Father in His mediatorial work; and this authority to lay down His life and take it again, was under commission from the Father. But, as referring to our Lord, the term expresses essential *power*, and refers to the commandment only so far as authorizing this voluntary laying down of life. This power, therefore, would prove Him to be God. He could rise from the dead only by bursting the bands of death—only by conquering the last enemy—as no creature could. His resurrection was properly His own work, by virtue of the Spirit of the Father dwelling in Him, and filling Him. See ch. 2: 19. ¶ *This commandment.* The whole work of salvation was in His power. Eph. 1: 17; 1: 20; Matt. 28: 18; Col. 1: 19. All things in Heaven and earth were given to Him. And such a commission implies, of course, a corresponding

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, He

hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a

a c. 7. 20.

capacity to exercise it, and thus shows Him to be divine. No being less than God would be able to execute such Headship of the universe as was committed to Christ for the mediatorial work. ¶ *My Father.* Here He claims that "the Father" (vs. 15.) whom the Jews professed to worship, was His Father—and so again He shows their obligation to receive Him and His work. vs. 17. "This commandment" refers probably to His entire work. He has shown wherein He is the good shepherd, as the Door—the Life—the Protector—the Ingatherer—the Prince and Saviour.

19. *A division.* Literally, a *schism*. The truth of Christ occasions divisions among men. Some object to the doctrine or to the person of Christ, and charge His word with evil origin or tendency. Others plead for it and maintain it. It is plain which side is in error. They were divided in their reception of Him. ¶ *Again.* This was not the first time. Where there is deep opposition of heart, there will be always fresh occasions of showing it. Where men are opposed to Christ or His Gospel, they will find objections—if it is not one thing it is another. See ch. 9: 16.

20. See ch. 7: 20; 8: 48. They scoffed at Him as before, saying that He was in league with evil spirits. This was the severest scandal—most blasphemous toward Him and most blackening to His name. It was the old accusation—"He casteth out devils by Beelzebub." Matt. 12: 24. ¶ *Is mad.* Raves, like a man possessed by a demon. They attributed His discourse, like His miracles, to demoniacal agency. ¶ *Why hear ye Him?* Why could they not allow others to hear Him, even if they would not listen? This shows their malice. How fiendish it is to undermine the only

hope of the sinner—to try and turn men away from hearing Christ, the only Saviour of the lost—to drive away hope from the world! These are they who have a devil! These are the words of those that have a devil. There is no more satanic word than this that says of Christ, "He is mad, Why hear ye Him?"—It was so in the garden. The tempter, the Old Serpent, which is the devil, said to our first parents, "Why hear ye Him?" So Paul was charged with madness, and appealed to His words, as words of truth and soberness. Acts 26: 24. The religion of Christ is not to blame for sects or schisms in any case, any more than in this. Bengel remarks, that these men were wont to receive most severely His weightiest and sweetest discourses.

21. *Others.* If the schism consisted in these breaking off from the reviling Jews, and taking the side of Christ, then it was a separation from the body of blasphemers and from the synagogue of Satan—and it was well. ¶ *The words.* This was a fair judgment, on the best grounds. They judged Christ by His words. By these, men shall be judged. Matt. 12: 37. By these Christ declared that they should be judged. "The word that I have spoken unto you, the same shall judge you in the last day." Ch. 12: 48. ¶ *Can a devil.* These men appealed to Christ's miracle which He had so lately wrought among them. This sounds like Nicodemus. This connects the discourse with ch. 9. It was good reasoning that they used. The devil does nothing to help or heal men, but only to harm them. His works are not redemptive, but destructive. It is like our Lord's reply to the charge of working miracles by Beelzebub—that it would be Satan's working against Satan.

devil. Can a devil open <sup>a</sup> the eyes of the blind?

¶ 22 And it was at Jerusalem the Feast

a c. 9. 6, &c.

¶ 91. JESUS IN JERUSALEM AT THE FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION. HE RETIRES BEYOND JORDAN.—*Jerusalem. Bethany beyond Jordan.*

Matt.

Mark.

Luke.

John.

[10.22-42.

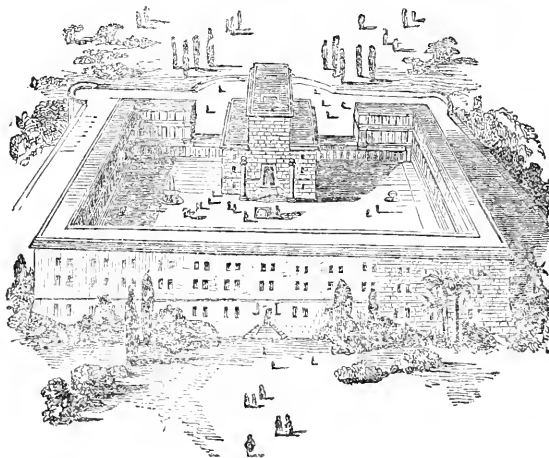
22 *At Jerusalem.* There was an interval of two months between the Feast of Tabernacles and this Feast of Dedication. And as John has said nothing of any journey of our Lord from the city, but rather implies, in this passage, that He tarried there, during this time, we suppose that He was engaged in the city and vicinity, pursuing His great work which was soon to close on earth. ¶ *The Dedication.* The term here used means, *the renovation*—and refers to the re-consecration of the temple under Judas Maccabeus, after it had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, in the year 167 before Christ. This wicked monarch sacrificed a sow on the altar of burnt offering, and made a broth of it, with which he sprinkled the temple, in derision of the sacred services.

of the Dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. <sup>b</sup>

b Ac. 3. 11; 5. 2.

After three years the city was recovered by Judas Maccabeus, and the temple was purified—during an eight days' celebration—and an annual festival was established in honor of the event. It began on the 25th day of the month Chisleu, answering to the eighteenth of our December, and lasted eight days, with illuminations of their dwellings and great joy—and not at Jerusalem alone, but through the land, 1 Macc. 4: 41-59; 2 Macc. 10: 1-8; Jos. Ant. 12: 7-9. ¶ *Winter.* This refers not merely to the season, but mainly to the weather. It was stormy, inclement weather; and this was a reason for His walking in the porch, rather than without. The assembling of the people at this public festival, was a reason for His appearing in the temple at that time, “that His preaching might yield more abundant fruit amidst a large assembly of men.”—*Calvin.* “In the temple in Solomon's porch,” means—in that part of the temple buildings. 1 Kings 6: 3. ¶ *Solomon's porch.* This porch, or portico,



24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make <sup>1</sup> us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the <sup>a</sup> works that I do in my Fa-

<sup>1</sup> or, hold us in suspense. a c. 5. 36.

as well as others, was built outside of the temple proper, for persons to walk there without exposure. It was in the fore court of the heathen on the East side. Some suppose "this was a part of the temple buildings that was left standing when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem."—*Tholuck*. So Josephus asserts. Ant. 20: 9, 7. It is mentioned in Acts 3: 10; 5: 12. It was on the side towards the Mount of Olives, and was one of the corridors or piazzas surrounding the temple proper, and running along the outer wall, as seen in the *Cut*.

24. *Make us to doubt*. The phrase so rendered, means literally to *raise up the mind*, and hence is generally understood as to *hold in suspense*. This would also seem implied by the next clause. This was a cunning attack upon Him, pretending now to be earnest seekers after the Messiah and wishing only to know if He were the Christ. But they aimed to get some ground of accusation against Him and hoped that He would make some pretension or claim upon which they might accuse Him. ¶ *Tell us plainly*. The term means *openly, boldly*—keeping back nothing. He had not distinctly said that He was the Christ, but He had professed to be and to do all that was promised of the Messiah, leaving them to infer the fact of His Messiahship. He preferred as yet to claim the attributes rather than the name, as they attached to the term Messiah very extravagant ideas.

25. *I told you*. This reply shows that they were seeking to entangle Him, and asked now from no good motive, else He would have answered otherwise. He had told them enough.

ther's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But <sup>b</sup> ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27 My <sup>c</sup> sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

<sup>b</sup> c. 8. 47. <sup>1</sup> Jno. 4. 6. <sup>c</sup> ver. 4.

He had claimed to be the Son of God. He had wrought miracles, proving His Messiahship. Ch. 7: 31. And their question implies plainly that they understood these things as evidence of His being the Christ. He says, therefore, Ye might have learned enough from my words. ch. 7: 26. See, also, ch. 5: 19; 8: 36-56; 10: 1. ¶ *Ye believed not*. This was all along the radical difficulty. If they had been disposed to receive His testimony of Himself, or His appeal to the Father's testimony, (in His works,) they would have found no obscurity in the matter. OBSERVE—Men often charge the Gospel with obscurity, when all the difficulty lies in their unbelief. ¶ *The works*. The miraculous works, such as *restoring the blind man*, which was a kind of miracle which the prophets often ascribed to the Messiah. Isaiah 42: 7, 18. ¶ *In my Father's name*. Here again He reminds them of the authority which He had from the Father, whom they professed to worship, and who was also His Father. These miracles, wrought in the Father's name, were most convincing proofs of His being the Messiah. The miracles they could not deny, but could only accuse Him of working them by Beelzebub.

26. He now explains the difficulty, according to the parable which He had just spoken to them. They were an illustration of that parable. They proved themselves to be not of His sheep, because they heard not His voice.

27. He now repeats in substance the part of the parable which was so applicable to their case. See vs. 3-16. Compare ch. 8: 47. ¶ *My sheep*. If

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they <sup>a</sup> shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

a c. 17. 12; 18. 9. He. 7. 25.

they were of His sheep, they would believe, for this is *their characteristic*. But because they do not know His voice and follow Him, and because they are not of His own chosen flock, therefore they do not believe. Believers' conduct and state of mind are thus traced to their relation to Him. The Messiah was prophesied of as a shepherd—and the Father's fellow. Zech. 13: 7. But the shepherd has his sheep, as the parable had shown—and one of their characteristics is this, that they know him, hear his voice, and follow him. He whom true Christians follow is Christ. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." So, also, They who hear the shepherd's voice are the sheep. They who hear Christ's voice are His people. *She who hath the Bridegroom is the Bride*. This obedience to Christ, and this presence of Christ, will always mark the true church. ¶ *I know them*. This is the seal upon the foundation of God's church, (2 Tim. 2: 19,) and so it standeth sure. This is the great security of God's people. See vs. 14. ¶ *They follow me*. Rev. 14: 4. As these cavilers did not hear His voice, nor follow Him, He could say to them "I never knew you." Matt. 7: 23.

28. Eternal life, *given* as a free gift to sinners, implies all that leads to it—as their calling, quickening, teaching, ingathering, leading, and conducting to the end. This perfect ultimate possession He *gives* now. He gives eternal life to as many as are given to Him by the Father. Ch. 17: 2. "And *this is life eternal*, that they might know thee, the only true God, and *Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*." Ch. 17: 3. Hence the true sheep—His own sheep—have the knowledge of Christ given to them, which these had not. ¶ *Never perish*. It would be impossible to give eternal life to any, as a free gift, unless it were possible to secure their perseverance unto the end. Our confidence must not be

29 My <sup>b</sup> Father which gave <sup>c</sup> them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

b c. 14. 28. c c. 17. 2.

reposed in ourselves, but in God alone. He bids us look to His Divine power and grace, and trust His promises, and rejoice in His finished work. And then He cheers us with the assurance that we shall never perish—that as surely as He has undertaken for us, we shall be carried safely through. Neither in this life, nor at death, nor in eternity, shall they be destroyed. The term here used, seems to refer rather to their own course—"they shall never perish," nor *fail*. The next clause refers to assaults from without. ¶ *Shall any*. It is not "*any man*," but any being—whether of principalities or powers. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against them." The timid Christian often fears that the malice of Satan will prevail against him. But he is secured by the watchful, covenant care of his good Shepherd—and the great encouragement is, that having given His life for him, He cannot fail to give "all things that pertain to life and godliness." 2 Pet. 1: 3. ¶ *Pluck them*. The term means, literally, to *steal them*, by any craft. However they may come *like a thief*, they shall not snatch them out of His hand. Neither the cunning artifice of Satan, nor the power of the pit shall do it. He will never be found off His guard—nor ever wanting in power. They are in His hand, given to Him by the Father, (ch. 17: 2,) and for their keeping and safe conducting to Heaven, all power is given to Him over all flesh. Ch. 17: 1-3. But this, of course, is not irrespective of their conduct. Their consistent Christian conduct will be secured as a constant token that eternal life is given to them. As it *is given* now, and not in future, they who have it will show it by their vital piety. That they shall not fall utterly away into ruin, is the promise.

29. Which gave, &c. See ch. 17: 1-4; ch. 6: 37. All things in the

30 I <sup>a</sup> and my Father are one.

a c. 17. 11, 22.

economy of redemption are arranged among the persons in the Godhead. Whatever is *of the Father*, is *by the Son*, *through the Holy Spirit*. Christians are chosen (of the Father,) to salvation, (by the Son,) through sanctification of the Spirit—all which secures their belief of the truth. ¶ *Is greater*. If anything further were needed to set forth this redeeming work, He refers to the fact that it is secured by the very throne of Jehovah, whom they professed to worship. He is the Supreme Lord of the universe, and all His infinite attributes and resources are pledged to preserve His own sheep from final apostacy and perdition. The power and grace of God Jehovah cannot be overcome; and before they could perish, it would be necessary to overcome God Jehovah Himself. ¶ *Greater than all*—men or devils. He is supreme. None can surpass or defeat Him. Neither man, nor Satan and his hosts can do it. They are *not able* to do it. No language can more plainly set forth the precious truth that Christians are Christ's own. To make them not *His own*, would be to make Him a hireling. vs. 12. 2. That they are given to Him in covenant by the Father. 3. That in carrying out their redemption He gave Himself for them, in their stead. 4. That He gives to them life and eternal life—calls them by an effectual calling—quickens them by His Spirit—teaches them, renews their will, and leads them safely on to glory. 5. That on account of the Godhead so undertaking for them, "their final salvation is as secure as the infinite love, power, wisdom and faithfulness of the divine Father and Son can make it."—*Brown*. They are in His Father's hand, as truly as in His own hand. This would show that He Himself was something more than the mere man that they might think Him. And so He more explicitly adds in the next verse.

31 Then <sup>b</sup> the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

b c. 8. 59.

30. He has just said that the sheep were equally in His own hand and in His Father's. And what He says of Himself, He says likewise of His Father—that no power on earth or in hell should be able to snatch them away. He therefore ascribes the same work to both—the same power, and not merely the same will. To explain this, and enforce it also, He asserts the great truth that He and His Father are one—the essential unity of Father and Son in the Godhead. He claimed the same *Omnipotence* as the Father. And as Good Shepherd, He claimed a commission which none but God could bear or execute. The phrase is, literally, "I and my Father are *one thing*"—a unit. They were not one person—but one essence—"what the Father is, that the Son is—what the work of the Father is, that the work of the Son is."—*Brown*. As none can effectually prevail against the Father, so none can prevail against the Son. These two are one—one in nature—one in attributes—one in glory. In this work of redemption, the *Son* and *Spirit* are said to be sent by the Father, and in this sense they are sometimes spoken of as subordinate. Christ also, *as man*, is spoken of as *inferior*. When He is referred to as man or as Mediator, men often take the passages as denying those which speak of Him as equal with the Father. But both are true; and they are consistent. *Sabellius*, in the third century, taught that there is but one person in the Godhead. But this is denied by the plural term "*are*." *Arius*, in the fourth century, taught that Christ is not God. And this is denied by the singular term, "*one*." We cannot understand this passage as teaching merely a unity of will and of plan—as though they merely worked in harmony. The connexion shows that it was a oneness of divine work and of infinite power, such as implies oneness of *essence*, that He would have to be

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone

thee not; but for blasphemy; and because <sup>a</sup> that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

a c. 5. 18. ver. 30. Ps. 82. 6. Ro. 13. 1.

understood by the terms. And so He was understood at the time, by those who heard Him, as appears from the next verse.

31. In these words which He had just spoken, the blind Jews saw more than the Anti-Trinitarians see to-day. If they had understood Him as claiming to be only a Divine man, and not to be the Son of God, as truly as the sons of men are men, they would not have said what they did in vs. 33—that when He was only a man and nothing more, He made Himself God. *Bengel*. They took up stones to stone Him as though He had spoken blasphemy. Levit 24: 10, &c. ¶ *Again*. See ch. 5: 18; 8: 59.

32. “He not only denies that they have any rational ground for their fierce anger, but He also accuses them of ingratitude, in recompensing the favors of God so unjustly.”—*Calvin*. Here He declares: I. That He had done only works of mercy and love among them, as healing the sick, restoring the blind, &c., works which clearly came from the Father, because they were miraculous works, done to destroy the works of the devil. He had not come among them visiting them with swift destruction, but only with salvation. ¶ *Good works*. The phrase is, *excellent works*, in the sense of “works of love.” 1 Tim. 6: 18. He appeals to them also for His innocence. ¶ *Shewed you*. Meaning that these works were part of the manifestation of Himself as the Son of God. ¶ *Do ye stone me*. Are ye about stoning me.

33. *Blasphemy*. This charge was repeatedly made against Him—even on His last trial before the Sanhedrim. Matt. 26: 65. Indeed, if *He had been anything less than God, it would have been blasphemy*, according to the Jew-

ish law, and according to the proper sense of the term. ¶ *Because*. See ch. 5: 18. They clearly show how they understood His words, and here they state explicitly the charge against Him as grounded on those words. ¶ *Makest thyself*. In ch. 5: 18, it is more fully expressed—makest thyself equal with God. The words imply of course that He made it so when it was not so. They did not believe that as He was a real *man*, so He could also be *very God*. They, like many since, have taken for granted that if He was man He could not be God—not seeing how it was necessary for a Mediator between God and man, to be both man and God, in two distinct natures and one person forever. This they ought to have known from the prophecies of the Messiah.

34. If our Lord had not been God as they understood Him to claim, would He not now at once have corrected their error? Would He have insisted rather on what He had said? This would have made Him a blasphemer. The apostle Peter when he was mistaken for a Divine person, immediately and earnestly denied any such claim, and corrected the mistake. Acts 10: 26. “Stand up! I myself also am a man.” Instead, however, of denying that He claimed to be God, He vindicated His claim.—The whole Old Testament sometimes is called “the law.” See ch. 12: 34; 15: 25. He referred them to a passage in the Psalms, (82: 6,) in which the Jewish magistrates are called *gods*, as bearing a high commission from Jehovah. “I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.” Reference is made to Exodus 21: 6; 22: 9, &c., where magistrates were so called.



35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, \* and sent into

a Is. 11. 2, 3; 19. 1, 3. c. 6. 27.

35, 36. The point then is this—If in your own Scriptures God calls them *gods*, (officially entitles them so,) to whom the word of God came—(to whom God, in those passages, spake—or to whom a Divine commission came as magistrates to execute God's word)—how can ye accuse one of blasphemy for calling Himself the Son of God, when He has a far higher commission from the Father—has been set apart by Him, and sent by Him into the world? His object was only to take them up on their own ground, and show their unreasonable enmity to Him—to expose the root of all their bitterness, in the unbelief and malice of their hearts. They cared not for the honor of Jehovah. They were not so anxious to vindicate His name from blasphemy. They found no fault with such passages in their Scriptures; but their enmity was against Him, and it was simply because they were not of His sheep, vs. 26. ¶ *And the Scripture.* This is a parenthesis, and means that this title, referred to in the Psalms, &c., cannot be explained away. They were bound to abide by their own Scriptures. They could not make them invalid to suit the present moment—nor would He wish to do so. Therefore, they would much more be obliged to charge blasphemy upon God Jehovah, who, in these passages referred to, called even magistrates acting under His commission, gods.

35. *The Father.* He does not use the term “God,” but “*the Father*,” thus claiming the relation of Son, and showing that the Father was such, and the Son also, before He was sent into the world. ¶ *Sanctified.* The term generally refers to moral purification. But here and elsewhere (Heb. 10: 29) it has the Hebrew sense of the Old Testament ritual, and means, *set apart* to

the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am <sup>b</sup> the Son of God?

37 If <sup>c</sup> I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

b Ph. 2. 6. c. 11. 10, 11; 13. 21.

a holy office or work. It was used in reference to the selection of holy prophets. He pleads, then, His high commission and the testimony of the Father, which had been brought to the level of their apprehension—and claims for Himself, even from what they had seen, a better title to the name of God, and Son of God, than they found in their Scriptures, in reference to magistrates, kings and judges; especially as these were rebuked there for abusing their official trust, and He had shown them nothing but *excellent works* of love. All this He said, not to explain His Godhead, but to expose their malice, and turn their own Scriptures against themselves. If He had meant to show that He claimed to be God, only in the sense of a Judge or a magistrate, He would have said so, and they would have been satisfied. But they were not any more satisfied, nor any less determined to punish Him as a blasphemer, vs. 39. ¶ *The Son of God.* Why should they count this to be blasphemy, when in the same Scriptures, also, even in another of the Psalms, the Son had been spoken of as one entitled to supreme homage—“Kiss THE SON,” Ps. 2:—and this was the same as had just before spoken—“The Lord said unto me, thou art *my* SON,” as “heir of all things,” entitled to ask for the possession of the ends of the earth. Therefore, when the Jews accused the early Christians of worshipping more Gods than one, Justin Martyr replied, that “frequent mention is made in the Old Testament of a person who is called God, and is God, and yet is distinguished from the God and Father of all.”—*Justin*, p. 261.

37. He again appeals to His miraculous works, as before, and does not at all lower His claim to Godhead, but

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore they sought again

insists on it, and confirms it by the Father's testimony in the works. ¶ *The works.* The very works that my Father does—these are works of Omnipotence and of all Divine attributes; and this proves Him to be God, as God is proved by His works. This is the very point which He had urged in the words which so offended them, viz., that He attributed to Himself the same Omnipotence which He attributed to the Father, and the same Almighty work of defending and securing His people to the end—which proved that He and His Father were one.

38. *But if I do.* If He wrought such works as were evidently divine, and which none but God could work, He claimed their confidence as God. They were bound to credit the works, even if they did not receive His own personal testimony. ¶ *Father is in me.* That is—that *they are one* as He had said. This is only another way of stating the same truth of their essential unity. Not, that the Father was in the Son, without the Son being in the Father; but that equally they were in each other. Ch. 14: 10. This remarkable language shows that the divinity of Christ could not be merely a partaking of divine qualities (by the Father's being in Him,) without His being actually God. For He is in the Father as truly as the Father is in Him. And it cannot be the same relation to God as that of His people—for though He is said to be in them, they are not said to be in Him, in the same sense. “I in them, and thou in me.” Ch. 17: 23. *That ye may know*—“That ye may be led on to the higher faith of the unity of myself and the Father”—This was what He labored so to teach them, and what they were so incensed to hear. Chs. 5–10.

to take him: but he escaped out of their hand;

40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place<sup>a</sup> where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

a c. 1. 28.

39. It is plain that by these words He did not mean to modify or qualify at all His positive declaration that He was one with the Father, nor to make Himself anything less than God. For the Jews were moved by what He said, to seize Him—probably to bring Him before the Sanhedrim for trial, on the charge of blasphemy—thinking that they had now, from his own lips, the means of convicting Him. ¶ *He escaped.* The term does not convey any idea of secret escape, or of miraculous escape. But the inference seems plain, that there was some supernatural restraint upon them—for the word is simply, “*He departed*” as though He walked away as freely as He would have done, had no violence been aimed at Him. “God grant,” says Augustine, “that we may ‘take Him,’ and not let Him go.”

40. *The place.* This was Bethany, called Bethabara beyond Jordan. Ch. 1: 28. Here He remained a few weeks probably, and not the whole of the four months up to the time of His last Passover. It was a quiet, retired region, whither He would find rest from the pursuit of His enemies, and the minds of the people had been much prepared by the labors of John there for His ministry. Here He also was, at least in this region of Perea, when He was recalled by the message of Lazarus' death, (ch. 11: 3, 7,) and the sisters seem to have known where to send for Him. In ch. 11: 64, He is said to have gone to a city called Ephraim, near Bethel, in the valley of Jordan, there to have continued with His disciples. From this place, however, He probably made short tours; and Matthew and Mark tell us that in His final journey to Jerusalem, He came up to Jericho by the farther side of Jordan;

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle : but all things that John spake \* of this man were true.

a Matt. 3, 11, 12. c. 3. 30-36.

(Perea,) and Luke states, also, that He went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. Luke 13: 22.

41. OBSERVE—1. John's ministry was more beneficial to this people after he was dead, than it had been during his life—and the end of his ministry was attained in bringing them to Christ. 2. The persecutors of our Lord promoted His cause by driving Him out of their midst. ¶ *No miracle.* They reason thus—that John did no miraculous work, and yet they believed on him. How much more then, should they believe on one who wrought such wonderful works, especially as He was just what John had predicted He should be.

42. The success of our Lord's preaching toward the end of His life, is here recorded. OBSERVE—Present success in the conversion of men is not always to be required as a proof of one's ministry. What is faithfully preached may spring up as good seed, after we are dead. Even our Lord did not have equal fruits of His ministry at all times, or in all places. 2. When men come to Christ—become acquainted with Christ—and come to know Him for themselves, they find that all that the Scripture says of Him is *true*, and that the reality far exceeds the report.

## CHAPTER XI.

### § 92 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.—*Bethany.*

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.    |
|-------|-------|-------|----------|
|       |       |       | 11.1-46. |

This chapter records the miracle of raising Lazarus from the grave, which is more spoken of than any of our Lord's miracles, and is truly the most wonderful exhibition of His Divine power. He had raised others from

42 And many believed on him there.

## CHAPTER XI.

¶ NOW a certain man was sick, named

death—as the daughter of Jairus—who had just died, (Luke 8: 41, &c.) the widow's son, of Nain, on the way to the burial, (Luke 7: 11-17,) and now more remarkably still, this Lazarus, who had been dead four days. John alone of the Evangelists has recorded it. The Jewish skeptical philosopher, *Spinoza*, is said by Bayle the historian, to have assured his friends that if he could feel convinced of the reality of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would dash to pieces his entire system and would embrace without reluctance the common Christian faith. Disbelievers in the miracles of our Lord, have resorted to every method of questioning this transaction, but in vain. The miracle of the blind man in ch. 9, was most abundantly established, as we have seen, by the judicial examination to which the man himself and his parents were subjected. And if Christ wrought that miracle, or any one miracle, this proves His claims, and makes it utterly vain to dispute His claims, or to deny the fact of miracles having been wrought by Him. Those who come to the examination of the scripture with the *foregone conclusion* that a miracle is impossible, may be expected to put forth the most extravagant theories in order to do away with this plain narrative. Yet it turns out that a belief in their theories is more difficult, than a belief in the miracle itself. That John alone, of the Evangelists, has recorded this particular miracle, some have held to be an evidence against it. But the fact that they all did not record it, as they would naturally have done, is rather a proof that they wrote their Gospel narratives at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, who had a plan, and a method, and an object in each of the four testimonies. Some suppose that it

Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of  
 \* Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was *that* Mary which <sup>b</sup> an-

<sup>a</sup> Luke 10, 38, 39.    <sup>b</sup> Mar. 14, 3.    c. 12, 3.

was because Lazarus was living when the others wrote, and, that though the miracle was well known, the publication might have exposed Lazarus to persecution. See ch. 12: 10, 11. Yet this is mere conjecture, and the reason of the silence on the part of the other Evangelists, is beyond our reach. A complete history of our Lord's wondrous life and doings, none of them, nor all together could possibly give; because there would be no end to the records. Ch. 21: 25. John, however, would find this miracle to suit his object of setting forth most strikingly our Lord's Divine Person. Besides, it was his particular relish to present so lovely and tender a view of our Lord, as is given in the scenes at Bethany. We are indebted to John's narrative for the detailed description of this Christian family--this brother and these sisters *whom Jesus loved*: and John as that disciple whom Jesus loved, may be supposed to have been drawn towards them, in a holy sympathy, as sharers in the precious intimacy and friendship of the Lord.

1. *Named Lazarus.* The name means, *help of God*—or, *one whom God aids*, answering to the Hebrew name *Eleazar*. John alone mentions this brother, whose name first occurs here. Luke speaks only of the sisters. ¶ *Bethany*. This village is now called *Lazarie*. The Arab name is "*el Azariyeh*," from the Arab form of "*Lazarus*." Passing out of St. Stephen's gate, down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, across the brook Kedron and along the edge of Gethsemane, the foot-path winding up the slope of Mount Olivet brought us on the Eastern declivity to the village of Bethany. We entered it on our route from Jerusalem to Jericho, as our Lord entered it on His final return to Jerusalem from Jericho, after healing the blind men and saving Zaccheus. Lu. 19: 1. Simon the leper also lived there, (Matt 26: 6,) and the site of his

ointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

house, as reputed by the monks, was pointed out to us. It is a scattered and desolate village of a few families—not more than twenty. The tomb is held as the chief matter of interest; and this great miracle of our Lord which is now to be narrated, has come down to us in the name of the place. We started at a quarter before 8 o'clock in the morning, from our quarters in Jerusalem, and tarrying a few moments at the summit of Olivet to look in at "the Chapel of the Ascension," we came to Bethany at twenty minutes past eight. ¶ *The town of Mary*. This is added to distinguish it from another Bethany beyond Jordan. Ch. 10: 40. These sisters were well known from the public accounts given of our Lord's life in the Apostolic preaching—and here they are referred to, to designate the town where they lived. These pious sisters, from their friendship with our Lord, were important enough to make this village known by their name as residents there. Bethany was honored in having such a family to reside there. A great blessing, indeed, to Bethany, were these sisters who drew our Lord thither. During the latter days of His life, He is spoken of as often going out from the city to this town, and He was wont, no doubt, to seek repose in this friendly circle, from His enemies and His conflicts. Mark 11: 12; Luke 21: 37. Mary is here spoken of *first* as though she were the eldest—according to the custom—as "James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother." Martha, however, is spoken of by Luke as if she were the mistress of the house Luke 10: 38, and in vs. 5 and 19 Martha is put first and may have been the eldest.

2. *That Mary.* The Evangelist now distinguishes this Mary above the others of the same name in the Gospel history, by the very distinguished act of her's in anointing our Lord. The

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he <sup>a</sup> whom thou lovest is sick.

*a* He. 12. 6. Re. 3. 19.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but <sup>b</sup> for the glory of God,

*b* c. 9. 3. ver. 49.

anointing took place after this time, but the Evangelist, writing at a still later period, refers to it as to a well-known transaction. Besides, it was predicted by our Lord, that this act of Mary should be everywhere published wherever the Gospel *should be preached*, (Mark 14: 6-9,)—and here Christ is called the Lord. The narrative is given by John, ch. 12: 3. OBSERVE—How great the blessedness of Mary, to be known by such a deed. How happy for any one of us to be known on earth or in Heaven as the one who put special honor upon the Master before men. See Heb. ch. 11, where a list of Old Testament worthies is given, with their distinguished Christian deeds. ¶ *Whose brother*. This clause shows that Mary and her deed of love are here mentioned in connexion with the sickness of Lazarus, to show that her act of devotion was of some importance in this case, and a bond of tender interest binding the Master to that household, and making a kind of presumptive claim for Lazarus in this extremity.—The Lord often regards us for other's sake—children for the parents' sake—and members of a Christian house for the sake of some distinguished Christian character among them. Gen. 26: 4, 5.—Here it is plain that Lazarus was beloved of God as well as the rest. vs. 5.

3. *Sent*. The sisters sent at once to Christ for this reason, that their brother was sick. It was a good reason for sending. As it proved, it was no common sickness. We may and ought to send for Christ in every necessity. This prompt proceeding shows their intimacy with the Saviour. Often He had passed a friendly evening and night with them from the crowded city, and now, when Lazarus was sick, why should they not inform Him? Besides, they knew of His Divine power—had wonderful confidence in His ability to heal him, (vs. 21,) though

not in His power to bring him from the dead, vs. 24. They have something, therefore, yet to learn: and the faithful Master will put their faith to a severe but gracious discipline. ¶ *He whom thou lovest*. Bengel remarks that this was more modest than to say, "Behold he who loveth thee." So John called himself "that disciple whom Jesus loved." The term used here by the sisters, to express the love of Christ to Lazarus, is not the same term which the Evangelist uses in vs. 5, to express the love of Christ to the sisters and Lazarus. The former designates rather the natural affection—and the latter the esteem which is based upon reflection. See ch. 21: 15, and *Notes*. The term used in the phrase "The disciple whom Jesus loved," is the latter. ¶ *Is sick*. The message was doubtless for His aid in this extremity, hoping that He would come and heal him. They seem to have thought it enough to acquaint their good friend with the fact. They send no message, as others had done, "Come down ere he die," (ch. 4: 49,) "Come and lay thy hands on him, and he shall live," (Matt. 9: 18,) nor even "Speak the word only, and he shall be healed," Matt. 8: 8. They only, in utmost delicacy, remind Him of *His love* for their dying brother, and are content to urge that tender plea. So our strongest ground to take in prayer is this—the love which Christ bears to us, and His plan of redeeming love for sinners. His finished work may be pleaded, and by all the love He has already shown to such as we, we may put in our plea for whatever else we require. Rom. 8. "He that spared not His own Son—how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The sisters knew where Christ was. It was but a full day's journey from Jerusalem to this Bethabara beyond Jordan, and they could look for help shortly. We may think of the

that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

messengers as winding along the dreary defiles of the mountains around Jerusalem, on the lone and perilous road to Jericho and the Jordan, bearing the message which expressed at once the great love of the sisters to their brother, and their great confidence in *that friend that sticketh closer than a brother*.

4. *This sickness*. Our Lord spoke already of the issues of this sickness, as they were known to Him. He meant to say, that it was not to terminate in death, though the man should die; but rather in the glory of God as the great end and object, by causing death itself to be despoiled of its prey. The friend of God is to be raised from the dead! Shall not the disciples then believe that Christ Himself is superior to death, and will not remain under the power of death? ¶ *Not unto death*. This seems to have been our Lord's reply to the messengers. How trying to the poor sisters, who had only hoped that He would reach them before Lazarus had died, and now after he had been dead a whole day, they get such a strange, mysterious answer—"This sickness is not unto death." ¶ *But for the glory of God*. It is thus that our Lord prepares the mind of the sisters and of the people to behold what is coming to pass. He gives them a clear hint of what they cannot yet understand, but shall understand by the event. Martha seems (vss. 39, 40) to have inquired about this, as soon as the Saviour arrived. Our Lord doubtless foresaw also the fact that, by means especially of this miracle, His own death should be brought about—and thus it would lead directly to His *glorification*. OBSERVE—While the sisters send to tell Him the news, He knows more about it than they—and already He saw the end from the beginning. OBSERVE—God's honor is here shown to be one and the same with the honor of Christ—the glory

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

of God consists in the glory of God's Son.

5. *Now Jesus loved Martha, &c.* "*Happy family*," says Bengel. How beautifully this fact is thrown in just here by the Evangelist, to show how this answer of Jesus sprang from no coolness toward them, and to prepare us for what else might have seemed a lack of love—His *delay* until after the death of Lazarus. OBSERVE—The love of Christ to us is not the less in such dark seasons, as though He cared not for us when He delays to come for our help, in such temporal extremities. It may be the very way in which He will prove His Divine, Omnipotent love, when presently, after our time, but in His own time, He shall appear for our deliverance and salvation. OBSERVE—1. These whom our Lord loved are yet in the greatest distress—the sisters are in anguish over a dying brother, and Lazarus is himself drawing nigh to death. 2. Martha, as well as Mary, is beloved, though she has been often severely judged, as little better than censorious and fussy—a fault-finder and a busy-body. 3. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Heb. 12: 6. 4. So our Lord will be glorified in the death of all whom He loves.

6. This verse connects with vs. 4, showing that He understood the case, and had a high object to serve by it; and therefore, though He loved them all, and every one of them personally, He delayed two days to go thither. Rom. 15: 4. It even seems to be hinted that He delayed, just because of His tender love to them. He to whose Omnipotence it was just as easy to raise a dead man as to heal a sick one, performed no less an act of goodness in permitting the sickness of Lazarus to run on, and then raising him. Lazarus was already dead before the messengers returned, and probably

7 Then, after that, saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late <sup>a</sup> sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? <sup>b</sup>

a c. 10. 31. b Ac. 20. 24.

about the time that they reached Him. OBSERVE—1. These loving sisters did not send for Christ till the last extremity—they did not give Him time to reach them. Even *they* seem not to have sent promptly as they ought, but to have waited until all other means were proved fruitless. Do we not often thus *delay* to *send*, and make it more perfectly fit in Him to *delay* to *come*? 2. How often it is proved that the present delay is really the best indication for us, and shows that it is just because there is some greater good in store. 3. We do not see the end from the beginning, and therefore in our straits we sometimes “charge God foolishly.”

7. *Then*. Here we see the faithful acting out of His love. It was not because He had forgotten them that He tarried—nor because He had nothing to do for them. He will go soon enough to work a most mighty and glorious deliverance. ¶ *After that*. His holy and gracious providence has its successive steps—carefully fitted to the results. The steps are as much decreed in all their order, as are the issues. He could not go until “*after that*.” The message He had sent back, and the delay, would all serve an important purpose in His plan of grace, to test their faith, and to work patience, experience and hope. Rom. 5: 3. “He would let the need come to the highest, before He interfered.”

8. *Of late*. Literally—*just now were seeking*—that is—*very recently*. ¶ *Sought to stone thee*. This refers to ch. 10: 31–39. It would seem that it was on account of His enemies at Jerusalem that He had retreated to Perea, and

17\*

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If <sup>a</sup> any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, <sup>a</sup> he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

c c. 12. 35. d Ec. 2. 14.

Thomas evidently thinks that His return would be His death. vs. 16. It was in December that these assaults on Him had been made.

9. *Are there not twelve hours*, &c. Just as surely as there are twelve hours in the natural day, so the day allotted to me for my work has its full time, and cannot be cut short. So long, therefore, as it lasts, I am safe, and you are safe on the same principle. So Whitefield said, when he was assaulted by the mob, “I am immortal till my work is done.” See ch. 9: 4. “I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day. The night cometh wherein no man can work.” ¶ *Stumbleth not*. Just as a man has the natural day to do his work in, and during the daylight he does not stumble nor suffer interruption from darkness coming upon him—so it is with me and with you, and therefore your fears are not well founded. Under all this natural illustration is the great truth that He Himself was “the Light of the world.”

10. Here He thinks of Himself not only as having His day, but He thinks of them also as having theirs. And when He thinks of His day as about to close, how can He help thinking of their day as depending on His light, and as closing by His withdrawal? The idea seems to be—it is *you* that are in the dark, and not *I*. And this is because, as regards this matter, ye have no light in you. Therefore, you stumble now, where to me the whole course is plain. I have the light of the Father, and walk in His light, while my day lasts on earth. But ye are groping and stumbling because ye

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; <sup>a</sup> but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

<sup>a</sup> De. 31. 16. Ac. 7. 60. 1 Cor. 15. 18, 51.

have not here this inner light, and because ye judge carnally and are in the dark—since you take not Me to be your light and guide in the world. The *single eye* which would illuminate the whole body, they had not here. Matt. 6: 22, 23. So Isa. 8: 20. “To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” OBSERVE—It is when we oppose our judgment or will to that of Christ, that we forsake our only true light—and stumble. Lord thou knowest better than we, what thou shouldest do, and shall we presume to advise thee or dictate to thee, even as to what thou shouldest do to us?

11. *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.* Our Lord now gives them the great reason which He has for going to Bethany at the call. He speaks of Lazarus as *sleeping*. Matt. 9: 24. This it is, “in the heavenly tongue”—in the higher sense—as distinguishing Christian death—“*sleeping in Jesus*.” “Blessed sleep, from which none ever wakes to weep.” 1 Cor. 11: 30; 15: 51; 1 Thess. 4: 14; 5: 10. How tenderly does Christ communicate this personal friendship. How strongly does this love to Lazarus and the sisters impel Him now to go! What shall keep Him back? No fear of danger shall stop Him. His love is bent on going at the proper time, just as much as on delaying before the time. The use of the term “*sleep*” for death, is also found Matt. 26: 52; Acts 7: 60; 13: 36; 1 Cor. 11: 30; 15: 6; 18: 20; 2 Pet. 3: 4. The verb here rendered “*to wake out of sleep*,” is found no where else in the New Testament. The adjective which corresponds with this verb, is found in Acts 16: 27. In the Septuagint the verb is used only

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

once—to translate the Hebrew term in Job—“raised out of his sleep.” Job 14: 12. It is one word, and means, literally, to *unsleep one*. It is not the word used for resurrection. OBSERVE—1. The view which our Lord takes of a Christian’s death is, that it is a sleep. 2. The view that He takes of death as to be broken in upon, and broken up by His resurrection-power is, that it is a sleep. With the daughter of Jairus it was a sleep, because He would so treat it, and would so soon awake the dead damsel. Matt. 9: 24; Mark 5: 39. With the Christian it is a sleep, because it is a sweet repose, to be followed by the glorious morning of the resurrection unto life.

12. *If he sleep.* The disciples understood that Lazarus was in a stupor, and they had heard Christ say, (vs. 4,) that the sickness was not unto death. They would naturally enough think, therefore, that if he were only asleep he would recover. It was commonly understood among them that sleep in sickness was a sign of speedy convalescence, as it indicated a favorable turn in the disease. They were bent on dissuading Him from going to Jerusalem.

13. It is wonderful that they should have understood our Lord as going to Jerusalem, simply to awake Lazarus out of natural sleep—or that this should have been sufficient ground of a message to Him from the family. He must also have spoken those tender words, “our friend Lazarus sleepeth,” in a way to express His emotion. But they were ready to take His words in their natural sense, and to fail of their spiritual import. So in Matt. 16: 5-12, where He spake of the *leaven* of the Pharisees, &c. So also ch. 4: 32-34; Luke 22: 36-38.



14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead :

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent

ye may believe ; nevertheless, let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow

14. *Plainly.* So our Lord stoops to their infirmities, and most tenderly corrects their misapprehensions of His words. So He did often, in unfolding His parables. "Do ye not yet understand?" ¶ *Is dead.* We are not to suppose that He had received any second message; but of His own Divine knowledge He perfectly understood the facts and knew of the event without their telling Him. Was He not present there, though not in the flesh?

15. *Not there.* If the Prince of Life had been present there, how could Lazarus have died? See vs. 21-32. And when He arrives there, death will vanish before His word of power and grace. vs. 22. Therefore the more sublime and glorious manifestation awaits you, just because I was not there. And this was my pleasure in delaying until he should die. "I am glad therefore, *for your sakes.*" vs. 42. This was my intent as regards you. Instead of raising up Lazarus from a bed of sickness, they are all by this miracle, to be raised up together with Lazarus, unto a higher life of faith. ¶ *Believe.* More fully and truly than heretofore. They were to be led into greater degrees of faith and to believe in Christ, in this new and more sublime aspect, as raising the dead. ¶ *Nevertheless.* But—notwithstanding your objections and fears. ¶ *Let us go unto him.* To the dead Lazarus—where he lies. This would further intimate that He had an errand to that corpse, and would have something to do with it; though, probably they thought it would be only to take a last look, and mourn over the remains of His dear departed friend. How far does the gracious purpose of Christ transcend our poor carnal thought. How much more will He do for our dead bodies than we have dared to dream? "Who shall change our vile body." Phil. 3: 21.

16. *Called Didymus.* The word means "twin," and the Hebrew name Thomas is the same as the Greek or Aramaic term *Didymus*. When this Apostle finds the Master bent upon going to Bethany against all that they could say, he seems to acquiesce only in a spirit of despair, and says to his fellow disciples, Let us also go with the Master, since He is determined on it: and inasmuch as it must be fatal to Him, let us at least die with Him. This is the first time that this Apostle is brought to our view—and this is his character—looking on the dark side of things, as we find in the other two instances. Ch. 14: 5; 20: 24-29. Yet with this uncomfortable temper, which must have been to himself the source of so much unhappiness, we find him full of steadfast devotion, even where he anticipated the worst: ready to die with the Master rather than desert Him. "A remarkable mixture of faith and unfaithfulness." He could not hope against hope. He could look only on the side of "common sense," as it is called—and not on the side of that *uncommon sense* which the Spirit gives. He is the representative of a class—desponding, full of dark apprehensions and through fear (of death,) all their life-time subject to bondage. And this miracle was to be wrought to elevate and confirm such wavering faith, in him, and in all like him. Well is it if doubters find in them yet, this spirit of devotement to the Master. They who would die with Christ rather than desert Him, shall find their fears put to shame, and shall see Him working wondrous triumphs over death, so as to assure their confidence. If now this Thomas shall be given to see the Master, for whom he trembles, raise the dead Lazarus, shall he not believe that He will raise Himself from the dead according to His promise?

17. *Four days.* It was a good day's

disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, <sup>1</sup> about fifteen furlongs off :)

1 l. e. about two miles.

journey of the messengers from Bethany to Perea, (twenty-three to twenty-nine miles,) and our Lord's delay of two days, with the day for His coming would make the "four days." In this case, Lazarus must have died on the day the messengers were sent, and according to the Jewish custom of prompt burial, he must have been buried the same evening. See vs. 39; Acts 5: 6-10. More likely as Tholuck, (6th Edition,) thinks, Lazarus had lain in the grave *three days*, at the time of the arrival of Jesus, and here the fourth day, yet incomplete, may be counted with them. He considers it certain that Jesus did not make the whole journey in one day, for He went to the sepulchre on the day He arrived, as a comparison of vs. 17 and 39 shows—and must consequently have spent parts, at least, of two days on the road. He therefore supposes that Lazarus died during the night following the arrival of the messengers, and was buried the following day, and that the part of the day on which he was buried, and the fourth, which was incomplete, are reckoned. It is not necessary to suppose any information of this fact, as being carried to our Lord on His approach to Bethany. "*He found*" the fact, just as He knew already very well. "*Four days already.*" This is twice brought to view. vs. 39. "A hopeless period, it would seem!" One day more than "the third day" of our Lord's resurrection. Perhaps nearly *two whole days* more: as our Lord lay in the grave only one whole day and the parts of two more.—The first *three days* were days of weeping, and the next *seven* were days of lamentation among the Jews.

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to <sup>a</sup> comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

a 1 Ch. 7. 22. Job 2. 11; 42. 11. Ro. 12. 15. 1 Th. 4. 18.

18. *Fifteen furlongs.* This nearness of Bethany to Jerusalem is recorded to account for the throng of Jewish visitors, who came to condole with the family after the custom of the Jews. The distance was less than two miles. The Jewish forms of consolation commenced with these words, "*Be ye comforted from the Heaven,*" &c. It was mostly a barren formality. But the better Comforter—the kinsman Redeemer, the merciful and faithful High Priest—the sympathizing Saviour—the brother born for adversity—"the friend that sticketh closer than a brother," was on His way to give comfort not in the dead, vapid form, but in the reality. Mourners had come in from the town, and besides these, the Jews from Jerusalem swelled the condoling company.

20. *Martha, as soon, &c.* This shows the active impulsive character of Martha. The moment that some one brought to her word of Jesus's coming, she went forth on the road to meet Him—full of excitement—and came up with Him outside the village. vs. 30. Martha may have been engaged in some out-door work, and so she may have first got word of Christ's coming. But plainly she could not stop to tell Mary, but quitting everything as we may suppose, hurried off to meet Him for whom her soul had yearned so much those last few dreary days. *Sitting* was the posture of grief, and this seems to be expressed here. Job 2: 8; Ezek. 8: 14. See Ezra 9: 3, 4; Neh. 1: 4; Isa. 47: 1. ¶ *Mary sat still.* Literally—*sat in the house.* Who doubts that Mary also would have hastened to meet Him if she had known of His coming. As soon as she

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever <sup>a</sup> thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

*a c. 9. 31.*

did hear, *she arose quickly* and came to Him. vss. 28, 29. "To meet a friend coming to us in our affliction is something, but this meeting was with such feeling as none can know but they who beheld in the flesh Him who raised the dead."

21. *If thou hadst been here.* This was the great thought uppermost in their minds, which had been struggling for expression since their brother's death. "It is the bitterest drop in their whole cup of anguish, that all this might have been otherwise: had this sickness befallen him at any other moment, when Christ was nearer: or had He been able to hasten to their aid so soon as He was summoned, all might have been averted, and they might have been rejoicing in a living brother, instead of mourning over his corpse."—Mary also met our Lord with the same exclamation. vs. 32. From this we may infer, says *Bengel*, that prior to their brother's death, the sisters had often exclaimed, "O that the Lord Jesus were here, or would come!" So, indeed, Jesus had hinted to the disciples, (vs. 15,) that if He had been there the death would not have occurred. But Martha speaks here out of her knowledge of His power and love, as she had seen it manifested towards others and towards herself. But, Martha! could not Christ have saved your brother without being present? Oh, how this staggering, struggling faith needs to be schooled, and how it will yet be tried as with fire, like gold.

22. It may be, that what He had said to the disciples had been repeated to Martha, and that thus she had caught a glimpse of hope. Or she had believed that the same power which could have kept him from dying, could do something—any thing—to relieve

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the <sup>b</sup> resurrection at the last day.

*b c. 5. 29.*

them. Had she not heard of Jairus' daughter, and of the widow's son, raised fully a year before? And in her deep sorrow had not every thing rushed through her mind that could suggest relief? And yet when her faith is brought to the point, this is more than she can receive. ¶ *Whatsoever.* It is certainly a great stretch of her faith, that ventures to think of Christ's prayer or power as going beyond death and the grave. And yet she thinks of Him only as prevailing with the Father, and not as having the power in Himself. High thoughts and poor thoughts of Christ these might seem to be. But it is rather, perhaps, the simplicity of her faith, which does not put forward any request, nor venture any dictation, but throws out in this extremity so delicate a suggestion, as though she would only ask of Him what He could get at the asking.

23. *Shall rise again.* The term here used is that which is commonly applied to the resurrection. It is used darkly, to lead her on to the requisite faith. It is capable of being applied to the final resurrection, and to a present raising from the dead. But the Master would exercise her faith, prove the extent of her confidence, and lead her along gradually to the reality. OBSERVE—She could hint of such a possibility as would relieve the case even yet. But what she could even desire, she could not believe as actually possible. It was too good to be true.

24. She understands the words as they are spoken, *in the general*, and gently repels the cold comfort to be drawn from his final resurrection. Nay, she even seems now to be *drawing out the Master*, as the Master was *drawing her out*. I know, she says, that he shall rise again at the last day, *if this*

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the <sup>a</sup> resurrection and the life: <sup>b</sup> he that believeth in me, though <sup>c</sup>

c. 6. 40, 44. <sup>b</sup> Is. 38. 16. c. 14. 6. I Jno. 1. 2.

is what thou meanest. Yet, perhaps, at this delicate venture, she hoped to get something more immediately satisfactory, or to find that these very words were meant by Him to apply to what He would *even now* do.

25. *I am the resurrection, &c.* "These words are the central point of the history—the great testimony to Himself, of which the subsequent miracle is the proof." The object is to call her attention to the great truth that the final resurrection which she supposes He speaks of, and to which she looks for the raising of her brother, can give her nothing apart from His own power and grace. And the resurrection is not a resurrection, but a final perdition, except as it is in Him; only they who are raised to eternal life are truly raised from the dead. Therefore, He says, instead of looking to the distant future for the resurrection, as though it were something of itself, or anything good apart from me, look by faith upon me—for I am in myself the resurrection in the highest and best sense. The dead shall be raised at last only by my power—for "all they that are in their graves shall hear His voice, (the voice of the Son of Man,) and shall come forth." And more than this, "I am the *life*"—without which, the resurrection is of no advantage, but the contrary. By me alone can any attain "the resurrection unto life." So (ch. 14: 6,) when Thomas asked about the way which He was going, as if it were the road to some other city or town that He spoke of, Jesus answered him, "I am the way and the truth and the life." He thus calls attention to Himself as able to satisfy all their wants in the highest sense. What need to wait in distant prospect of the final resurrection, as the nearest source of hope for thy desolate case, when He is here who is the very resurrection itself, and more than this, is

he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever <sup>d</sup> liveth and

c Job 19. 26. Is. 26. 19. Ro. 4. 17. d c 3. 15. 4. 14.

the life itself. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15: 21. He is "the Prince of Life." He is, therefore, the resurrection in the highest sense—not merely the bodily, but the spiritual resurrection, and the raising of the soul is the greater work, and involves the raising of the body as the lesser. Thus He leads the thoughts from all other helps and comforts to Himself as the present Saviour, and shows her that in Him alone she may obtain most perfect deliverance, both for Lazarus and for herself, from bodily and spiritual death. Ch. 1: 4; 5: 26; 14: 6; 1 Cor. 15: 22; Acts 3: 15; Celos. 3: 4.

26. *He that believeth, &c.* This is the higher truth which He would have her understand—that faith in Him makes death no bar to life—nay, it makes one live in spite of death—though he has even died as Lazarus—it gives him life from the dead in the highest sense. And this calls for and *claims* the resurrection of the body. This is the sublime comfort which the gospel of Christ gives to the dying believer, and to surviving friends. ¶ *Though he were dead.* Literally, *though he have died*—as Lazarus has done—Christ triumphs over death—He hath abolished death. ¶ *Shall he live.* This surely does not mean to refer her to the final resurrection, so much as to show her that it is alone by faith in Him, that any resurrection can come to pass, and this might naturally enough start the query, whether, as the sole power was in Him, this glorious work could not be done by Him on the spot. *He "shall live,"* whenever I please to raise him up, and not necessarily at the final, general resurrection day, only. He shall live despite the power of death, and shall have victory over death through Me. By believing in Me, he becomes united

believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

to the Prince of Life, and he possesses a life of the soul which calls for a quickening of the body. See ch. 6: 32-59. Thus Christ explains how He is "*the resurrection*." In the next clause He will show how He is "*the Life*." ¶ *And whosoever liveth and believeth, &c.* This may be read, "whosoever of all living, believeth in Me," or "whosoever liveth in the higher sense, and believeth in Me." The latter would involve a repetition of the idea, as "whosoever liveth (*by faith*), and believeth." Therefore the former is the true sense, and the declaration is intended to apply to all living, as the former clause applied even to one who might have actually died. He had said that a man who had even died, should live—and now He says that any living man who believeth, shall never die, in the deeper sense—eternally—that is, he shall live in the truest, fullest sense of life, spiritual and eternal. Thus, what He had said substantially in the positive sense, He now says negatively, in reference to all the dreaded power of death. Some understand the whole verse to refer to spiritual life, and to signify that the believer, *though he were dead in trespasses and sins*, shall live through Him, &c. This is indeed a plain truth of scripture, but the teaching here does not exclude a reference to the resurrection of the body. Both are included and connected, as in ch. 5: 25, 26, and 28, 29. *See notes.* OBSERVE.—The believer is not exempted from the form of death, but it has lost its sting to him. 1 Cor. 15: 55. Christ is the Bread of Life—the water of Life—the Light of Life—the way, the truth and the Life—the Resurrection and the Life—the Prince of Life, (Acts. 3: 15,) and because He lives, we shall live also. He it is *that liveth*. Rev. 1: 8. It is He that quickeneth, (Rom. 4: 17,) He is our Life, (Col. 3: 4,) He is the Fountain of Life. Ps. 35: 9. ¶ *Believest thou this?* Our Lord now requires of Martha that faith without

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the

which He cannot do His mighty work. Matt 13: 38. He will have her confession of Him as this Prince of Life, before He will raise Lazarus. This was His plan with the two blind men, (Matt. 9: 28,) and with the father of the lunatic child. Mark 9: 23. He has now preached Himself, in the light of all that death seems now to have done, as the vanquisher of death, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light. And He only waits now for the hand of faith to be stretched out in order to grant the Almighty blessing. That He asked for her faith with a view to His working the miracle, is plain from vs. 40. And from that passage it seems also clear that our Lord here intimated to her, that if she would believe, she should "*see the glory of God*." OBSERVE.—If we can have faith in Christ in our dark hours, when we are surrounded by affliction—or when death has actually done his work—Christ will rejoice to display His power and grace. The true feeling is therefore, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job 13: 15. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Ps. 56: 3. "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me." OBSERVE—Martha needed all this discipline and this preaching of Christ to bring about this faith in her bosom—a higher conception of her Saviour than she had ever yet had—and if this is wrought in her by all these means, she will yet be thankful for the way in which her Lord hath led her. She will yet see cause for gratitude, even in His delay till the death of Lazarus, if by that means her higher life in Christ may be so gloriously secured. Let us not be disconsolate under our bereavements. Christ is coming to us to preach His own power and grace as the Prince of life, and we shall rejoice in Him as the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

27. *I believe.* Literally—I have be-

Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, <sup>a</sup> saying, The Master <sup>b</sup> is come, and calleth <sup>c</sup> for thee.

a c. 21. 7. b c. 13. 13. c. Mar. 10. 49.

*lived*—as her well-settled faith. This confession of Martha does not directly meet the points which our Lord proposes, except as this general confession of faith in Him covers all particulars. Augustine understands her to imply, “When I believed that thou wert the Son of God, I believed also that thou wert the resurrection and the life, with all the corresponding benefits to us.” “She did not know all which His titles involved, but all which they did involve, she was ready to believe.”—*Trench.* She names Him by three of His great names—the Anointed (Christ)—the Son of God—the Comer (He that was prophesied as to come.) This confession even seems to help her faith. She is now brought out of her darkness and doubt, to the point of happy confidence—and like a new-born believer, she hurries at once to her sister, to bring her to share the blessings of this conference and communion with Christ. From vs. 40 it appears that our Lord plainly signified to her that if she would believe, she should see His glorious power.

28. *Called Mary.* How natural was this. Whether the Master called for Mary in so many words, or, whether she meant only to say that His presence there had a demand for her attendance, is not important. “The time was,” says Bishop Hall, “when she would have called off her sister from the feet of that divine Master to attend the household occasions—now she runs to fetch her out of the house to the feet of Christ.” “A ray of comfort has found its way into her head, and she would fain make her sister a sharer in this.” Likely enough, however, the gracious, loving Saviour asked after Mary. ¶ *Secretly.* Lest the guests

29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews <sup>d</sup> then which were

d ver. 19.

might be scattered, or might keep back the sisters from going to Him, who was sought for His life, or, lest by their spreading the news, Christ Himself might thus be put in danger from His bitter enemies in and about Jerusalem. This fear was realized. vs. 46, 47. OBSERVE—1. Genuine experience does not always shout upon the house-tops, all that it has found out, and without regard to times or consequences, but sometimes, as “wisdom dwells with prudence,” it goes about quietly, and in gentle whispers like a sister’s call to come to Christ. 2. The glad tidings of the gospel addressed to every sinner are—“*The Master has come!*” And this is also the “good news,” that in His word, by His Providence and His ordinances, and by His Spirit through them all, He calleth for every one to come to Him.

29. *As soon as she heard that.* Mary we see was not less ready to run to Christ than Martha was. This was, doubtless, the first knowledge she had had of the Master’s being near. ¶ *Quickly.* Her promptness in going to meet Christ is here doubly stated. It was *as soon* as she heard it—and it was quickly that she went. She was not only prompt, but eager.

30. This is here noted to show how every step in the work was taken with a view to the great result. ¶ *Not yet.* Bengel remarks that Jesus did every thing with a suitable delay. His tarrying outside the city, somewhere near the burial-ground, which was always outside the town, brought the whole company of Mary’s comforters to Him. As they followed her toward the grave, they found themselves in the presence of the Master, and were thus brought

with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there.

into a situation to behold the wondrous miracle. vs. 31.

31. *She goeth unto the grave.* "This was but 'a loving suspicion' of theirs."



It was natural enough that her comforters, who had come to weep with her, seeing her rise up in haste and go out, at the bidding of her sorrowing sister, should think that they were going to the grave to vent their grief there. This was the custom of the Jews, as well as of other nations. See Matt. 23: 27. It was the practice of the Jews to visit the grave several times a day, during the first days of mourning. OBSERVE—1. Though her friends were around her, who came on purpose to give her consolation, yet the moment she hears of Jesus being near, she forsakes them and hastens to meet Him. 2. These friends came to comfort her—they follow her for the same purpose. They knew the sincerity of her grief: how devoted a sister she was. Yet she was a more devoted follower of Christ. They do what they can. But Christ

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if <sup>a</sup> thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

α c. 4. 49. ver. 21. 37.

alone can heal her inward wound. "While they supposed that she went to a dead brother, she went to a living Saviour."—*Bishop Hall.*

32. *When Mary was come.* This company of Mary and her friends thus comes out of Bethany to the suburb where Jesus was. Mary, however, was the chief character of that band. All this was doing for her chiefly, of that approaching group. "All things were slowly working together for good to her, as a lover of God, and as one called according to His purpose." ¶ *Saw Him.* Oh! how transporting was that sight to this afflicted saint. Now she saw Him whom her soul loved—for whose coming she had so earnestly longed—whose delay she had not been able to interpret—and whose power and grace were such as might yet accomplish some relief or restoration. Chiefly she needs some explanation of His not having come sooner. Two days haste would have made such a difference in their case. How is it? How can such a reflection be borne? It seems even to aggravate the grief, that He was so near, and that now (only too late) He is on the spot. "Lord, if thou *hadst been here* so short a time ago, Lazarus would yet have been alive." Mary thus gives expression to this one great thought of both sisters—the same with Martha, vs. 21. They say not, "my brother *might* not have died," but "*he would not have died.*" This they had so often said to each other, that, naturally enough, it is their first expression which they pour upon His ear. They reasoned from their experience of His love. As much as to say, Lord, whenever thou wast with us, no fatal malady could show itself. See Heb. 2: 14.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he

33. This was the tender sympathy of Christ—"touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Is. 53: 4. The tears of this beloved and bereaved disciple, moved Him to pity—and the tears even of the Jews who came with her, moved Him. "Mary wept. Her tears drew tears from her friends. All together drew groans from Jesus." But it is asked, "Did He know that He was to raise Lazarus. How then could He have wept?" Yes. But still His tender human nature was touched with sympathy. He felt their grief, even though He was so soon to relieve it. Besides, in this one instance He contemplated the curse of sin—the whole horror of death as the wages of sin, breaking up human peace, and appearing as the king of terrors, to the human family. Lazarus, even after his resurrection, was held in the power of death, as he had again to suffer death. ¶ *Groaned in the spirit.* The term here used implies a motion of *anger*. And if this enters into the idea here, it is an anger at the sight of the curse—the bereavement and sorrow—that thus broke up the comforts of His best beloved families, and called for His Divine resistance and vengeance to destroy the works of the devil. He seems to look upon all this death, burial, corruption and weeping, and say, "An enemy hath done this." Some understand the term as signifying only the effort to suppress His emotion, in order to utter the words that follow. "And, indeed what is every scene of suffering but the work of sin, the fruits of the fall—which had now called for His humiliation and death, in order to restore the ruins?" Well could His heart be moved at the sight: for because of these doleful consequences of sin, He had come into this fallen world to take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses. He could be no indifferent

groaned in the spirit, and <sup>1</sup> was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye

*1 he troubled himself.*

spectator—for this sight brought before Him the work of the devil, whom He had to encounter, and to whose hand, in death even, He must yield for a brief season. ¶ *Was troubled.* Literally, *troubled Himself.* For, as Augustine has said, "who could trouble Him, if He troubled not Himself?" It was no impetuous, uncontrollable emotion as in the case of the sorrowing company. It was orderly and according to the highest reason. At a proper time His emotions found vent in tears. vs. 35. It is the same word used here as in ch. 14: 1, referring to the disciples: "Let not your hearts be *troubled*." Christ was troubled in spirit that we might have peace.

34. Our Lord, at this rising of His spirit, advances to encounter the foe, and to show His power over Him, as it would be more fully illustrated in His own future victory. ¶ *Where have ye laid him?* These words are spoken in the consciousness of His Almighty power over death and the grave. He is eager to snatch this victim from the jaws of the destroyer—especially as it is the same destroyer whom He shall meet in a more personal struggle, to vanquish Him for Himself and for His people. He asked for the grave, not for information, but according to His custom, to call attention of the people to what was to be done. ¶ *They said.* They are not more glad of the question than ready for the answer. The question doubtless stirred some hope in those afflicted minds. Can we doubt that it was the tender voice of the sisters, always ready to respond to His questionings, that now caught a gleam of hope from this inquiry, and eagerly replied, *Lord, come and see!* Ah! in the very word with which they reply to Him, "Lord," we have the proof that it is His dear waiting disciples who speak.

35. *Jesus wept.* He shed tears. The hand of the destroyer came now so



laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept. <sup>a</sup>

36 Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him!

<sup>a</sup> Is. 63.9. Lu. 19. 41. He. 2.16, 17.

sensibly before His mind that He must now at length give vent to feelings which all along had struggled in His troubled spirit. vs. 33. Death is still an enemy though He is vanquished. Perhaps, in this struggle of our Great Captain of Salvation with this last enemy, it was His own hastening grapple with him in His own death, where He should destroy him that had the power of death, only by yielding for a little time to death itself, that brought the whole case of human suffering before Him, and thus brought the tears to His eyes. We may weep at the death-bed of friends, and over their graves, even though they have surely entered Heaven—for death is still the mark of the curse—and death does still sunder the tenderest ties, and disturb our family relations, even though he be compelled to serve us by setting us free from the body of sin and death. Our Lord is, in three places, said to have wept. See Luke 19: 41; Heb. 5: 7. But the “strong crying and tears” referred to in the last passage, may embrace many places through “the days of His flesh,” and especially point to Gethsemane. How could He have sweat as it were, great drops of blood in that agony, without tears. He was acquainted with grief as one is acquainted with that to which He has been schooled—since He learned obedience by the things which He suffered—in the school of affliction. “He hath borne our griefs.” But both in this instance, and at His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, where so far as regards Himself, He was showing forth His glory, He wept at the contemplation of human woes. OBSERVE—We have a merciful and faithful High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, though He is so exalted and glorious, because He also

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which <sup>b</sup>opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

<sup>b</sup> c. 9. 6.

was clothed with human infirmities, yet without sin. In the days of His flesh, He offered up strong crying and tears in reference to this very matter of being saved from death—and *He was heard in so far as the fear was concerned.* Heb. 5: 7.

36. *The Jews*, as the term is used by John, generally denotes the persecuting leaders from the Sanhedrim. Here, however, it refers to the friends of the bereaved family, spoken of in vs. 31. They who had been moved to tears by the tears of Mary, whom they followed to the grave, (vs. 33,) are now moved to admiration at the tears of Jesus.

37. *And some.* Literally, *but some.* There was another class who were inclined to query. Their minds turned at once to the foolish questioning which would go to put His power or His grace in doubt. They refer, as they naturally would, to His most recent miracle at Jerusalem, recorded in ch. 9, rather than to others which, even if they were more after the nature of this raising the dead, were done in remote parts, and in times previous. ¶ *Could not this man.* “Had ye said, *why would He not?* or, *why did He not?* the question had been fairer, and the answer no less easy, namely—for His own greater glory. Little do ye know the drift either of God’s acts or delays.”—*Bishop Hall.* They seem to think only of His power to *prevent the death* of Lazarus, not of His raising the dead—and in this respect they may have been influenced by the repeated lament of the sisters, “Lord if thou hadst been here,” &c., though this would naturally enough be the extent of their thoughts. OBSERVE—The sisters took exception to His ways. These start a question of His power. Thus it is that our complainings, under unbelief, fall in with the cavilings of the world. Un-

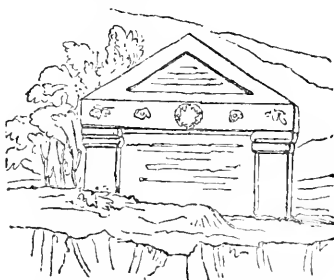
38 Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Mar. 16. 3.

doubtedly it was as easy for Him to have kept Lazarus from dying even at a distance, as to have opened the eyes of the blind. These questioners seem to admit this, and thus they confess the omnipotence of that miracle about which perhaps they had caviled with the rest at Jerusalem. vs. 26. We see, by the way, how strong an impression had been made by the miracle wrought upon the blind man.

38. *Again groaning*, &c. "Another of those mighty shuddering that shook the frame of the Lord of Life, so dreadful did death seem to Him, who, looking *through* all its natural causes, at which we often stop short, saw it purely as the seal and token of sin."—*Trench*. "It is not improbable that Jesus, who before groined in Himself for compassion at their tears, now groaned at their incredulity."—*Bishop Hall*. This is the third time that His deep emotion is noticed, vss. 33, 35, 38. Was it not, however, a wider view that He took, which compassed the events that were to spring directly out of this, (see vss. 46–53,) in which He should be brought to battle so dreadfully with the enemy. ¶ *A cave*.



The caves used for sepulchres among the Jews were commonly natural openings in the side of the rock, or artificial

the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time <sup>b</sup> he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 49. 7, 9. Ac. 2. 27.

excavations, like Joseph's of Arimathea. Matt. 27: 60. The tomb that is now pointed out as that of Lazarus, we found to be a chamber in the rock, under ground, entered by twenty-six rough, irregular and winding steps cut out of the rock. We descended with a guide and torch-light to the floor below. And in the centre of the floor there was an excavation, or vault, some five feet in depth, and stoned around, (not hewn out.) In this the dead was said to have laid. Had this been so, instead of its being in the usual way of a horizontal opening, we should need to contemplate the company as standing below, around the vault, and at the word Lazarus must have arisen from beneath, and stood up among them. Or it might be that the stone was only at the outer mouth, and that here the company were collected: but in this case Lazarus must have come up from beneath, without an unbinding of his grave-clothes. *Trench*, without knowing the actual description of this tomb, infers, from the terms used, that it was a vault, as the stone is said to have lain *on the tomb*. In case of horizontal excavations, the chambers—often several in one cave—had each a stone set up against the mouth, while there was also a stone for the outer door, or not, as might happen. *Robinson*, however, does not admit any probability of this being the real tomb or locality. He urges that the tombs were horizontal excavations. But they were not always so. And he further insisted that it was outside of the village. But this spot may have been at that time more outside than at present.

39. *Take ye away the stone*. The Almighty Saviour, though able to raise the dead, will nevertheless have creatures do what they properly can. It

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said<sup>a</sup> I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

<sup>a</sup> ver. 4. 23.

was not because He needed their help that He bade them do this; but to exercise their faith and obedience. So are all His commands meant rather as a service to ourselves than to Him. He needs not our work. But we need the training here for the glorious rest hereafter: for rest implies labor. OBSERVE—It is inferred from all the intimations, as from their possessing such a burial-place, and having so many condoling friends, and from Mary's costly box of spikenard (ch. 12: 3) for Christ's anointing, that the family was not poor, but rather the contrary. ¶ *Martha, the sister, &c.* Literally, "*Saith to Him the sister of the dead, Martha,*" &c. The Evangelist introduces the objection as coming from the sister, because it sprang from a tender sisterly feeling, that was shocked at the thought of exposure, where the precious body must already have seen corruption. John, nowever, tells us which sister it was, (*Martha,*) that we may understand the objection in the light of her character and of her position, as the head of the family. She who had the cares of the bereaved house so much upon her, was ready at once to suggest the expediency of uncovering the grave, and seemed for a moment to think that our Lord could not have known or considered the fact that he had been dead so long. Further, it is mentioned as showing how yet, at the very latest moment, and just an instant before Lazarus was to be brought forth alive to her embrace, this sister's faith was so lacking—so far short of the grace of her glorious Redeemer. How little thought has she that the stone is to be removed for any such Divine work—or that this command, "Take ye away the stone," has any thing to do with the snatching of that buried Lazarus out of the grasp of death! Had she seen an inch further into

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said,<sup>b</sup> Father, I

<sup>b</sup> c. 12. 28-30.

the future, could she have been found now hesitating to obey the Master, when thus she would be honored as co-operating with Him in the work of bringing Lazarus forth? OBSERVE—1. How our poor faith is ready to put obstacles in the way of Christ's glorious work, or at least to leave obstacles there where He has bidden us remove them. 2. How often, in objecting to Christian duty, we are found fighting against the very plan of Christ for our highest happiness. "In spite of all the unjust discouragements of nature, we must obey Christ's command." 3. Though Martha saw nothing but the likelihood of corruption in the corpse, He, who had from the beginning purposed to bring it forth, could easily have kept it from seeing corruption. Yet He who could raise the dead at all—He who will raise all the dead at last—could raise Lazarus from any degree of corruption.

40. *Said I not.* Jesus here has brought from her by His command, such a confession of her faith as shows its utter weakness, even though she had confessed Him as the Christ the Son of God. vs. 27. He therefore deals with her by reminding her of their previous conversation, and thus He aims so condescendingly to rally her weak, staggering, wavering confidence in what He was to do. We saw (vss. 26, 27, see notes,) that Martha seemed to have caught a gleam of hope as to the intent of Christ, from what He there said. Perhaps He said more that is unrecorded. Perhaps the reference is to what He said to the messengers, who would likely have carried the reply back to the sisters: "This sickness is not unto death, *but for the glory of God.*" vs. 4. Or, it may be He refers to their former conversation as having been to this effect, though He may not have said these very words.

thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou heardest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*,

41. *Then they took away, &c.* It is possible that they all had waited to see the issue of this questioning of Martha, as to the propriety of the act. And now, when our Lord more distinctly intimates that some glorious spectacle was to be seen in case she would believe, they see that there was every reason for removing the stone as He commanded. ¶ *Father.* How seasonably is this word spoken in the hearing of those Jews who so caviled, and were ready to stone Him because He made Himself equal with God. "How can ye now, O ye cavilers, object to that title which ye shall see so indisputably verified? Well may He call God Father, who can raise the dead out of their grave." *See Bp. Hall.* This is not a prayer that He utters, but a thanksgiving that He offers. Already, before He speaks, the Father has heard. And before this promiscuous crowd, He thinks it fit to make this public acknowledgment, professing the Father before men, and showing that He came to do, not His own will, but the will of the Father which sent Him. His first motion of will was met by the grant of the Father, and this was always the case, beyond any possibility of doubt. Therefore the oneness of Himself and the Father, which He had claimed, was proved by this striking and wonderful event. As if He had said, "I need not pray to persuade Thee, for ours is one will. While thou saidst nothing, O Saviour, how doth thy Father hear thee? Thy will was thy prayer."

42. *And I knew, &c.* He is heard without speaking, and without exception, *always.* He was heard even when He prayed in Gethsemane, (Heb. 5: 7,) with strong crying and tears, as to the possibility of being saved from death. He was heard in so far as respects the *fears* of death. For He

that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!

said after praying the third time, "Sleep on now and take your rest," I am relieved. And then at once, "Rise, Let us be going." I am ready. He says "*Father,*" claiming the recognition of His Sonship, and in order to have the people see, by the miracle, that the claim was recognized. This was the reason for His saying this. He does not say, "In my Fathers' name come forth," or, "Father raise him," "but throwing off the whole appearance of one praying, He proceeds to show His power by His acts." OBSERVE.—Christ was heard always. There was no possibility in the nature of things that He should not be heard, because He was of one essence with the Father. Therefore, lest any should think that sometimes He was heard and sometimes not, He states the case, that He did not even need to say Father, except to call attention of the people to the fact, that He was "the Son of God." "They should see that He claimed His power from above, not from beneath, that there was no magic—no necromancy here." The magicians and sorcerers of the day performed their wonders by whispering, muttering, by mysterious noises and signs. Our Lord had nothing to conceal, nor any trick or jugglery with which to impose upon public credulity. He cried therefore *with a loud voice*, in the tone of an authoritative command, and that all might hear what He commanded.

43. *He cried, &c.* This He did, also, in order that the people might understand that Lazarus came forth by the word of His power. He might have come forth at the secret motion of His will, and it would not have been known to be by His Omnipotence. But now He cries, and the dead obeys. Who can doubt that it is by His Almighty word? So at the final resurrection, it

44 And <sup>a</sup> he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face <sup>b</sup> was

<sup>a</sup> 1 Ki. 17. 22. 2 Ki. 4. 34, 35. Lu. 7. 14, 15. Ac. 20. 9-12. <sup>b</sup> c. 20. 7.

shall be "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God," at which the dead shall come forth. 1 Thess. 4: 16. ¶ *Lazarus*. He calls him by name, says Augustine, lest He should bring out all the dead. "He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out," as He had just said. ch. 10. ¶ *Come forth*. This is the life-giving command which is not a dead letter, but quickening—giving power for the performance. Such are the lively oracles to the people of God. "Only give what thou commandest, then command what thou wilt." Those sainted ones who are dead to us, are to and with Him, alive. It is the voice of the Son of God that shall raise all the dead from their graves. John 5: 28, 29. "He does not here say, arise, as He did to the daughter of Jairus and to the son of the widow of Nain; but *come forth*, as though He were already alive." Rom. 4: 17. The terms mean literally, *come out*—that is from the cave. If it was around the outer mouth of the cave that they stood, and if the cave now pointed out be the same, he must have come up the steps to the narrow doorway in his bandages, making the miracle doubly miraculous. But He whom the bands of death could not hinder, could not be hindered by these linen bands.

44. *Bound hand and foot*, &c. The manner of the Jews to bury, more or less resembled that of the Egyptians, as to embalming, &c. The corpse was wrapped in linen, (Luke 23: 53,) and here more expressly it is said *was bound hand and foot with strips of linen* which were wound around the limbs, separately, for the better effect of the embalming ingredients—and the more perfectly to saturate the flesh. See ch. 19: 40. I brought with me from the mummy pits of Egypt a human hand thus enwrapped—and around each finger the strips are wound in five

bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

thicknesses of coarser material, and then over the whole hand the linen is wrapped more loosely. The Talmud describes the custom as a wrapping around of the separate limbs, and a loose sheet over the whole. ¶ *Napkin*. This was a linen handkerchief, (Luke 19: 20; Acts 19: 12,) and was sometimes wrapped around the forehead, or tied under the chin. This napkin and the linen bandages our Lord threw off and left them lying where He had lain. Lazarus comes forth in them, that the bystanders may have an opportunity of seeing the man walk forth in his very grave-clothes, just as he had been laid in the grave so lately, and further, that they might handle him and take off now from the living man what they had put on him as a corpse. ¶ *Let him go*. Let him depart whither he pleases. As they had something to do in rolling away the stone, so as to have the closest contact with the miracle, they are now to put their hand and seal to the reality of it, by unloosing his grave-clothes. Even the Evangelist could not pretend to tell of the greetings that followed. Lazarus greeting the Saviour and embracing the sisters, and the whole company struck to the very soul by the great fact. OBSERVE—He that said "*take away the stone*," said "*loose him*." And it was the same also who said "*Lazarus come forth*." How shall we hesitate to obey the commands of Him whose command can raise the dead, and can succeed all our efforts, and at whose command we ourselves are to awake and come forth, (Dan. 12: 2,) and "*if we have done good to the resurrection of life*." OBSERVE—The sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, is bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and cannot come forth without the divine almighty word of Christ. But His word in the gospel is *quick* and powerful, it is lively and life-giving. And at the voice of the

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen <sup>a</sup> the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

a c. 2. 23; 10. 42; 12. 11, 18.

Great Quickener, the dead do start forth—they hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear do live. Ch. 5: 25. He hath “life in Himself,” and He is “the way and the truth and the life.” Ministers can roll away the stone—they can even in part unloose the *grave-clothes*. But only the almighty voice of Christ speaking to the dead soul can give life.

45. *Believed*. Our Lord had conducted the miracle in this particular manner for their sakes (vs. 42.)—that by raising Lazarus from the grave He might raise many from the deeper death of sin. Thus it came to pass as Christ had said, that “this sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God.” vs. 4.

46. Thus it came to pass, also, what Martha seems to have feared when she called Mary her sister *secretly*. vs. 28. Those who did not believe, set about at once to spread the report with evil intent, or, at least, with no purpose of good. So it came true that these Jews who did not hear Moses and the prophets would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Luke 16: 31. See Notes.

§ 93. THE COUNSEL OF CAIAPHAS AGAINST JESUS. HE RETIRES FROM JERUSALEM.—*Jerusalem—Ephraim*.

|       |       |       |            |
|-------|-------|-------|------------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.      |
|       |       |       | 11. 47-54. |

47. *A council*. Literally—a *Sanhedrim*. That is, the court of the Sanhedrim, the chief judicatory of the nation. ¶ *What do we*. What are we to do? This court was wont to assemble in a stone hall of the temple—and though seventy-one was the full num-

¶ 47 Then <sup>b</sup> gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What <sup>c</sup> do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, all <sup>d</sup> men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.

b Ps. 2. 2. c Ac. 4. 16. d c. 12. 19.

ber, *twenty-three* could transact business.

¶ *This man*. *This (fellow)*. It is spoken in contempt. And yet they admit the fact that He wrought many miracles. This, however, only made Him more dangerous in their view.

48. *If we let Him thus alone*. They seem to have regarded Him as likely to be set up as king, if He should gain thus the enthusiastic admiration of the people, or, they feared that it would, at least, awaken the jealousy of the Roman authorities against them, and thus their state and nation would be brought in disastrous conflict with the conquering armies of Rome. OBSERVE—How blind is depraved reason. That which they judge likely to bring against them the Roman power, namely, their *letting Christ alone*, was that which would have kept their city safe from desolation. The very thing which they dreaded, did occur, and that by the very means which they used to prevent it. These wicked persecutors, however, may have used this only as an empty pretext in order to carry their point against the opposing party in the Sanhedrim, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. See ch. 9: 16.

¶ *Our place*. This may refer to their *temple*, which was their pride and glory—or, it may denote only their local habitation. For the former explanation we have the examples, Matt. 24: 15; Acts 6: 13, 14; 7: 7; 21: 28. And probably the sessions of this court were then actually in the temple. But they would naturally have said “*this place*.” We may take it here as denoting the country generally. The sense is, to take away our land, and despoil our nation. Little did they consider that Christ was the Lord of

49 And one of them, *named* \* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is <sup>b</sup> ex-

a Lu. 3. 2. c. 18. 14. Ac, 4. 6. b Lu. 24. 46.

that land and nation—the New Testament Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Solomon.

49. *One of them.* This man was not only one of the council, but as High Priest he was President of it. He spoke, therefore, with authority, and his tone is that of positive, official prerogative. He presumed to lay down the case most definitively and conclusively. ¶ *Being the High Priest.* Attention is here called to the office held by Caiaphas at this time—to show the significance of such a counsel in his mouth, as the Spirit meant it to be prophetic, though Caiaphas thought not so. These words, uttered in the spirit of deepest malice by that officer, who represented the spiritual interests of the Jewish nation, were capable of a construction which would be full of the highest truth, and most expressive of God's gracious plan for the salvation of the people. How wonderfully thus, at this very crisis, the Jewish people, through their spiritual officer, are made to give their voice for the expediency of Christ's death as in order to the salvation of the people. And yet, this is the wonder of God's grace—that what was spoken in malice, with reference to their bloody murder of the Prince of Life, the Spirit remarks as about to come true in the plan of grace for the salvation of Israel. So it is that the body and blood which might be used as the confounding evidences of our guilt in slaying the Lord, are spread out as the very dainties of the Gospel feast—and that which was done by us in bitter hatred of our Lord, is turned into the elements of a banquet. Instead of being brought to be confronted by these things at the criminal's box, we are brought to be refreshed by these things as guests at His table. John also notes thus early the fact that Caiaphas was High Priest *that very*

pedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest

*year, as will more fully appear in the trial of our Lord.* Ch. 18: 13, 24. And thus he will have the connexion marked between these words and the official words and acts of this same man afterwards in the closing transactions. Having here given his advice, that Jesus should be sacrificed to political expediency, we are to understand all his official conduct in the closing transactions with our Lord. His death, it appears, is fully determined upon by Caiaphas already, and on such a base ground. He was High Priest not only during that year, but during all the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate—eleven years. Jos. Ant. 18: 2, 2 and 4, 3. It is asserted by some that there is doubt about the legitimacy of Caiaphas as High Priest, and that Annas was of right, most probably, the lawful officer. See ch. 18: 13, 24. Caiaphas, moreover, was a Sadducee. ¶ *Ye know nothing at all.* This was the overbearing tyrannical tone in which he would put down all half-way measures, and go at once for the death of Christ as the only safety for the nation. This is his view of political expediency. You know nothing about the case. Why hesitate where it is clear?

50. *Nor consider.* You do not at all consider the bearings of this case, and what expediency calls for. ¶ *One man.* A single individual in distinction from the entire nation. As much as to say, the source of all our trouble lies in this one person. If he were put out of the way the nation would be safe. What doubt then can there be that it is best for us to put Him to death, in order to save the people. There was no alternative in his mind, and he counsels accordingly for the death of Christ, on this plea.

51. *This spake he not of himself.* This record of the Evangelist throws

that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ;

important light upon these words. These words were uttered by him indeed with a meaning of his own. But being High Priest that year, he was the official representative of the people, (see Zech. 3: 1-8,) and was the official medium through which God might at times reveal Himself, as here. Accordingly the Spirit uses his words to express a great prophetic truth, as to the plan for Christ's vicarious death. Caiaphas meant nothing about the plan of God—or about Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice provided by God. But as High Priest, he was here employed to utter unconsciously a prophesy full of spiritual, saving truth. John notes the fitness of this, considering the office now held by Caiaphas, because thus the mad hostility of the Jewish people testifies, through their spiritual head, that Christ's vicarious death is expedient, and *that* for the salvation of the people—though they understand it only in the lowest, most wicked sense, condemning themselves. It is thus put on record as coming from this functionary who shall so soon use every means to secure this foregone sentence. And the event should soon interpret it—namely, that the only way in which it is really expedient that Christ should die for the people, is as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” ¶ *That Jesus.* Under these words of Caiaphas lay this prophecy of the Spirit, that the *one man* who should die and save the people by His death, should be *Jesus*: that He should die for that persecuting Jewish nation—(first in privilege though first in hostility)—and that it should be not for that nation only, but for others—the Gentiles—as the prophets had all along declared. ¶ *Gather together in one.* The Evangelist here adds a further explanation which fairly enough belongs to the prediction of Caiaphas, for he spoke of the whole nation and people of God—and this would include, in the

52 And not <sup>a</sup> for that nation only, but that also he should

*a* Is. 49. 6. Ro. 3. 29. 1 Jno. 2. 2.

mind of the Spirit through whom he prophesied, the true (spiritual) Israel wherever they might be: (Gal. 6: 16,) not only the Jews as such, but the Gentiles also, who should become the children of God. A far-sighted prediction indeed, extending infinitely beyond the anticipations of the apostles themselves, as yet, and falling in with our Lord's own words. “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice—and there shall be one (fold) flock, and one shepherd.” Ch. 10: 16. See Deut. 30: 3. Isa. 66: 8. It is remarkable that the Greek term for Gentile people is here applied to the Jews. It may not be without purpose, as the Jews were to become as Gentiles, and the Gentiles as Jews, on this plan. Isa. 49: 6-23; Ezek. 34: 12, 13. This gathering together of all Christ's family into one is the great object and effect of His Mediatorial work. “That He might gather together in one all things in Christ.” Eph. 1: 10; 2: 13, 14. He would break down the partition wall, and unite in one, all His true children, the true Israel—whether Jew or Gentile. “This is spoken of those who were in themselves wandering and lost sheep, but who, in the breast of God, were the children of God”—*Calvin*. OBSERVE.—A wicked man and a corrupt minister of religion was used by God, to utter most significant truth though he *meant* not so, neither did his heart think so. He meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. This already hints beforehand of the wondrous Almighty grace, by which God would make the wrath of man to praise Him—and turn the cruel death of the Prince of Life into the only way of Life for the world. So Peter charged it home. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Acts 2: 23. See the case of Balaam, Numb. 23: 24.



gather together in one the children of God that were scattered <sup>a</sup> abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took council together <sup>b</sup> for to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly <sup>c</sup> among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, <sup>d</sup> and there continued with his disciples.

¶ 55 And <sup>e</sup> the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and

<sup>a</sup> c. 10, 16. <sup>b</sup> Ep. 2, 14-17. <sup>c</sup> Ps. 100, 4, 5. <sup>d</sup> c. 7, 1; 18, 20. <sup>e</sup> 2 Sa. 13, 23. 2 Ch. 13, 19. <sup>f</sup> c. 2, 13; 5, 1; 6, 4.

53. *From that day forth.* There was hence a fixed purpose on the part of the Sanhedrim to put Jesus to death. It could not be, however, until His hour had fully come. See Note on vs. 57.

54. The malice of these persecutors would seek to slay Him at once. But as the Passover had not yet come, the true Paschal Lamb was not yet called for. He therefore retires away from the city into the border of the wilderness, to a place called Ephraim, near the desert of Judah, a short distance from Jerusalem, towards the North. The Sanhedrim were actively in search of Him, and there was already an order of theirs published, that information should be given of His retreat.

¶ 111. JESUS ARRIVES AT BETHANY SIX DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER.—

*Bethany.*

| Math. | Mark. | Luke. | John.       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
|       |       |       | 11, 55-57.  |
|       |       |       | 12, 1, 9-11 |

John's narrative here passes from § 93 to § 111 of the history, omitting our Lord's tour from Ephraim into Perea. See Luke, ch. 13-19. Returning to Jerusalem by Jericho, he called Zaccheus and cured the blind men.

55. *Jews' Passover.* John's language here, speaking of the Jews as of *another people* to those among whom he wrote, shows that he was at this time among the Gentiles, and hence, also, he explains their customs. ¶ *To purify*

many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

56 Then <sup>f</sup> sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

<sup>f</sup> c. 5, 16, 18. ver. 8.

*themselves.* The object of this ceremonial purification, as implied here, was to prepare for the Passover. They could not eat it if they were defiled. For this reason they would not enter into Pilate's judgment hall at the trial. Ch. 18: 28. Numb. 9: 6-13; 2 Chron. 30: 17-19; Exod. 12: 3-6; Levit. 22: 1-6. Crowds flocked from the country to the Holy City, because this ceremonial purification needed to be done at the Temple. Alas! those who are so intent on being clean from ritual defilements, are ready enough to imbrue their hands in the innocent blood of Christ. These hypocrites and heartless formalists are anxious not to go unclean in the eye of the letter, while they are most foul and vile in spirit. And presently, when they have hung their glorious Saviour on the cross, they will apply for leave to break His bones and pierce His heart, so as to get His dead body down from the cross before the Sabbath, lest they might violate that day.

56. *That He will not come.* They began now to fear only that He would not attend at the feast, and that thus they should lose their opportunity of seizing and destroying Him. Their guilty consciences agitated the question as to the probability, not of His coming, but of His *not coming*, as they had begun to doubt.

57. See Note on vs. 54. ¶ *That if any man knew.* They evidently expected

## CHAPTER XII.

THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany,

that He would be at or about Jerusalem, as they had heard of the great miracle wrought at Bethany, and as the feast was at hand. This order to any who knew where He was, to give information, was probably circulated by the agents of the chief priests among those who belonged to their party. When He appeared openly at Bethany and at Jerusalem, no man laid hands upon Him as yet. OBSERVE—1. How remarkable that this peculiar work of Christ—*His raising the dead from the grave*—should be that which led to His death. Sec vs. 53. Thus it was, indeed, that in giving dying sinners life, He was Himself to die, and to die at the hands of sinners. 2. It was in accordance with this order of the Sanhedrim that Christ was at length delivered up. “One of the twelve” who *knew where He was, showed it, that they might take Him.* “And Judas also, which betrayed Him *knew the place—for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples.*” Ch. 18: 2.

## CHAPTER XII.

The events recorded in this chapter, and on to the 19th, occurred during the six days preceding our Lord's death. Thus John occupies about one half of his gospel narrative with the transactions and discourses of this brief period, and that subsequent to the resurrection. His object was to set forth Jesus in His Divinity, and in those words and works of His which proved Him to be God.

1. *Six days before.* The chronology of these concluding days of our Lord's earthly history has been much disputed. Robinson, after Lightfoot, makes the arrival at Bethany to have been on the Jewish Sabbath—to which some object, that this would have been a violation of the law against traveling more than a Sabbath day's journey on that day. Yet we know not from what point He came that day, and it is not ne-

where \* Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

a c. 11. 1, 43.

cessary to suppose that the travel on the Sabbath exceeded a Sabbath-day's journey. He may have arrived indeed a little before, *i. e.* late on Friday evening (before the sunset or Sabbath morning.) See “*the Schedule of the days*” in *Notes on Matt.*, p. 209, ch. 21: 9, 10. Greswell, however, takes the phrase here to mean, *not six whole days before the Passover, but on the sixth day before*, according to the Greek idiom—just as “in three days,” meant on the *third day after*, when spoken of our Lord's resurrection. Ch. 2: 19. This would make the sixth day before the Passover (Friday) to be *Sunday*, the day *following* the Jewish Sabbath. See the “*Schedule of Days*,” according to Greswell, in Appendix of Notes on Matt., p. 314. Professor Wieseler, in his learned work on the “*Chronology of the Gospel History*,” argues that “had the Passover fallen on a Sabbath, our Lord must have set out for Bethany also on a Sabbath,” p. 377, which he says would have been a transgression of the law. He seems to take the phrase here to denote “*the seventh day before*”—which would be Friday. The phrase literally reads, “*Before six days of the Passover;*” which some would understand to be “*before six days before the Passover, not on the sixth, but positively on the seventh day before.*”—*Kittó's Journal*, vol. 6, p. 98. Tholuck, however, declares that “In this formula, the day on which the thing took place is always regarded as the *terminus a quo*—or point from which the reckoning is to be made.” Reckoning the day of the arrival as the first of the six, would bring the “*six days before*,” at Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath; which was the opinion of the early commentators. Examples are found in elegant Greek usage, where this phrase “*Before six days of*,” means *six days before*: and Lampe has shown that there is no difficulty in supposing that

¶ 2 There they made him a supper; and Martha \*served:

a Lu. 10, 38-42.

our Lord reached Bethany on the Jewish Sabbath. ¶ *The Passover*. This was our Lord's last Passover, and accordingly these six days are those which immediately precede His death. They are of great interest therefore. The closing transactions extend to ch. 19.

§ 131. THE RULERS CONSPIRE—THE SUPPER AT BETHANY—TREACHERY OF JUDAS.—*Jerusalem—Bethany*.

Fourth day of the week.

|           |           |          |         |
|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.    | John.   |
| 26. 1-16. | 14. 1-11. | 22. 1-6. | 12. 28. |

2. *They made*. It is not said *who* made Him a supper, but that a supper was made for Him. Matthew and Mark tell us that "being in Bethany, in the house of Simon, the leper, as He sat at meat," He was anointed by a woman, not mentioning her name. John, however, in ch. 11: 2, says "*it was Mary*, which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." John's object in that passage seems to have been to inform us of *who it was* that anointed our Lord afterward, (§ 131,) as recorded by the other Evangelists, and that it was *the same* who was so graciously served by our Lord in the raising of her brother. The two incidents are thus associated to intimate, perhaps, the special emotions of Mary, which led her, *soon after* the raising of her dead brother, to anoint our blessed Lord. It will be observed that the supper and anointing took place not on the sixth day before the Passover, as soon as He arrived, but on the *second day* before the Passover; that is, on *Wednesday eve*—after sunset on Tuesday, which was counted as Wednesday morning. See Matthew and Mark. Tholuck, (last edition,) Alford, Webster and Wilkinson, of recent critics, understand the supper to have been given on Saturday evening, (the Jewish Sabbath,) and that the proper location of it in the narra-

but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

tive is here given by John, as showing the historical order of events. See vs. 12. Yet, as located in the narrative of Matthew and Mark, it seems to give the order of events, and this especially to show how Judas was drawn out at this supper, and was instigated to the betrayal by what occurred there. ¶ *Martha served—Waited at table*. This was the habit of Martha. Luke 10: 38-42. She busied herself with domestic affairs; and though she is represented as anxious overmuch, she is to be praised as being anxious about serving the Lord, and making His sojourn happy. We are to remember, however, that it is possible to be so attentive to the outward concerns of religion, as to neglect the word of Christ. Luke 10: 41, 42. That this is not the same anointing as is recorded by Luke 7: 38, is generally agreed—as that was in a different place—Capernaum, probably—and the whole record is different, and the occasion and purpose of the anointing are different. The woman in that case, also, is represented as a notable sinner and "a woman of the city." It was such a transaction as could easily have occurred more than once. "Simon the leper" was probably a relative of these sisters. It is expressly mentioned that Martha waited at table, and that Lazarus was a guest, and that Mary was there with ointment, because it was not in their own house, which is elsewhere spoken of. Simon is mentioned by the other Evangelists as the owner of the house, and it is not certain that he gave the entertainment; but it may have been given by the "family of Bethany." Yet it would seem that he is spoken of as "*the leper*," in this connexion, to intimate that he had been healed of his leprosy by our Lord, and perhaps was taking this mode of expressing his obligation. ¶ *Lazarus*. This is mentioned to show the wonderful fact that this man who had been raised by our Lord from the dead, was sitting at the supper table as others, and was enjoying

3 Then <sup>a</sup> took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 26. 6, &c. Mar. 14. 3, &c. c. 11. 2.

again the society of friends, and the company of our Lord. Calmet supposes that he had been raised some two months before. This is the last that we hear of him. Of course he died again, as others.

3. *Mary.* Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, of course, as is expressly stated ch. 11: 2. The Roman Catholics represent Mary Magdalene as anointing Christ and washing His feet with her tears. This is not warranted by the name *Mary*, here given, which is surely not Mary Magdalene, nor by the mention in the other case, (Luke 7,) that the woman was a sinner. For she was also a woman "of the city" which was not Magdala, but Capernaum, more probably.

3-8. See Notes on the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, for explanation in full. ¶ *A pound.* Probably of twelve ounces. ¶ *Ointment.* The term is used to signify ointment artificially prepared and compounded of various perfumes. ¶ *Spikenard.* Literally—*nard*—an herb from the leaves and pods and root of which the ancients extracted a very precious oil. ¶ *Very costly.* Two terms are used here. Some understand the first term as denoting the place from which the spikenard came. But no such name is known. Some read it "*pure, or liquid nard.*" See *Margin* in Mark. Mark calls it by the same name, and adds a term meaning "*very precious*"—the same term as used figuratively in 1 Pet. 3: 4, with reference to Christ. Matthew also uses a similar term. ¶ *The feet.* Matthew tells us that she poured it on *His head*. So Mark. But John records the additional fact that she anointed His feet "because it was the greatest proof of love and reverence." "This ointment," says Kuinoel, "was doubtless the remnant

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

of what had been procured for embalming the dead body of Lazarus—for Jesus said "she hath kept this." vs. 7—And Judas blamed her, not because she had bought it, but because she had not sold the ointment." But this is mere conjecture. ¶ *Was filled.* John alone records this fact, and thus gives an odorous testimony to her odorous act. vs. 13. As the house was filled with the odor of her ointment, so the world shall be filled with the odor of her deed.

4. *Simon's son.* Sad, indeed, to be the father of such a son, and share in his deep disgrace. It was customary to call sons by the name of their father in this way, "Simon, son of Jonas." But who knows how the father may have been at fault for the wickedness of his son. John is the only one of the Evangelists who names Judas as the objector. The others speak generally of "the disciples" having indignation. Judas may have influenced some of them to think that this expenditure was quite beyond what the case required, and perhaps unacceptable to Christ. OBSERVE.—Some of the bitterest objections to Christianity are based on pretensions to great philanthropy and social reform, and are sometimes made to seem very plausible. But when the true motive is uncovered as in vs. 6, the gross hypocrisy is seen. ¶ *Who should betray Him.* Literally—who would in future betray Him—or *who was about to do it*, as our Lord already knew. It is mentioned here especially, because this feeling which Judas here displays was worthy of the traitor, and because this very incident led to the betrayal.

5. *Sold.* See Note on vs. 3. ¶ *Three hundred pence.* About forty dollars of our money. Friedlieb reckons it at £9, 16s, or about *forty-nine dollars*.

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief,<sup>a</sup> and had<sup>b</sup> the bag, and bare what was put therein.

a 2 Ki. 5. 20-27. Ps. 50. 18. b c. 13. 29.

6. John is the only one of the Evangelists who exposes the base motive of Judas. Christianity has always cared for the poor. It has built hospitals and alms-houses, and has sent missionaries with the gospel: and in the train of the gospel has followed social elevation to the poor and ignorant masses. When Infidelity pretends to care more for the poor than Christianity, it only needs that the true motive be laid bare, and it will be seen that it is some selfish and sinister end, political or personal, rather than any pure, self-denying love for mankind. ¶ *A thief.* The term here used, refers expressly to one who purloins or steals in secret—and not to one who robs by open violence. ¶ *The bag.* This word means originally a case or chest, in which the tongues or mouth-pieces of reed pipes were carried by musicians. It also means a casket for jewels—also a money chest, or bag, in which travelers carried their money, or other valuables. The disciples had such a purse in which they carried money for their expenses, or such as was contributed for the poor. Matt. 28: 45; Luke 8: 3; Acts 2: 44. Judas had this common purse in his keeping, rather, perhaps by his management, than by any special confidence in him. With his avaricious propensities, he probably sought this post of treasurer, and, of course, as he was not suspected by the twelve it would not be refused to him. ¶ *Bare.* This term might mean to *carry away privately*, and it probably means here to *purloin*, to *pilfer*. This would agree with Judas' character as a thief, and at any rate it is implied in the narrative, that this was the motive he had in wishing the ointment sold, and the proceeds put in the *poor-bag*. The term may mean simply "*he bare*"—was accustomed to carry, &c.—but this clause would then give no additional meaning. Many

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 For<sup>c</sup> the poor always ye have

c De. 15. 11. Matt. 26. 11. Mar. 14. 7.

men of good standing in society, have been led to take secretly from funds entrusted to their care. Often it has been with a purpose to return the money, and with a hope of becoming rich by so using it. The first intention, perhaps, has not been to steal. But when their plans have failed, and they have been detected in applying to their own use money that did not belong to them, they have seen their dreadful, ruinous crime, and when it was too late. They have brought lasting disgrace on themselves and their families, and even sometimes on the church of Christ. How shocking to think that the passion of avarice—the inordinate love of money led Judas on to stealing from the Treasury of our Lord—and then to betraying our Lord to death. OBSERVE—I. The steps to most enormous sin are gradual. One sin leads to another and a worse. Avarice often leads to theft—then to lying—then to betrayal of friends—then often to murder itself. 2. One may long keep up good appearances, and be even in good standing in the church, and be a hypocrite, a liar, a thief at heart, and in secret practice. 3. There is a false philanthropy that denounces all large hearted Christian benevolence—all missionary effort—all expenditure for Christ's cause, as needless outlay and waste—while it stands ready in reality to betray Christ Himself for a few pieces of silver. ¶ *What was put therein.* Literally, the *contributions*. By this we are to understand the money that was supplied by the liberality of friends—the charitable offerings thrown into this treasury of the Lord, for their expenses and for the poor. This explains his reason for wanting the ointment sold and put into that bag.

7. Our Lord defended her pious act, because He knew the disposition from which it came, and the circumstances—so nearly connected as it was with His

with you; but me <sup>a</sup> ye have not always.

¶ 9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he

<sup>a</sup> Ca. 5.6. c.8.21. ver.35. c.13.33; 16.5-7.

death and burial. The time for bestowing personal attentions upon Him was fast drawing to a close, as He knew—and though she may have had no reference in this act to His burial, He chose to regard it in this connection; and to His own heart, which appreciated sympathy and affection most keenly, it was peculiarly grateful in this light. ¶ *The day.* The words of our Lord here were prophetic of that day which was in effect now come. It was so near at hand—and this very incident was to put in train the agencies which would shortly bring it about. ¶ *My burying.* The term here used refers not to the act of burying but to all the funeral arrangements, of which the embalming was one. He chose to speak of this as a funeral service rendered to Him. He would regard it as if that pious office were paid by her to His corpse. She did it in His life, as she might not be able to do it in His death. It was to Him the same as an embalming. And by so speaking of the act, He not only predicted His speedy death, but signalized the pious conduct of this woman, giving it a significance and importance beyond all that she had thought. So our Lord chooses often to construe our devout acts and services as far more acceptable to Him than we had supposed they could be. No duty rendered to Him by a pious heart can ever be of small account. Judas may count it a waste. But He pronounces it a most sacred, personal service to Himself. They who think any large contribution to objects of Christian benevolence as waste—who would rebuke it and avoid it as *thrown away*—find themselves partaking of the spirit of Judas, and may soon be found also betraying the Master for sordid gain—even for one-half the amount they had grudged to His cause. See Notes on Matt. and

was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Mark; 1 Tim. 6: 9. It was the same evening, Wednesday, that Judas bargained to betray Christ. Luke 22: 3; Mark 14: 9, 10. ¶ *Kept this.* Bengel supposes that this refers to the money as having been kept for offerings to the poor as it might be needed: but that under Divine direction it had been kept by her, though not knowing beforehand how it was to be applied. Blessed are they who have money to give—a heart to give it—and a call of God to make it a most free-will offering and most acceptable to Himself. Such a deed shall be celebrated, if not on earth, in Heaven. Matt. and Mark record the remarkable promise and prophecy of our Lord, that this charity of the woman should be everywhere published with His gospel, in all the world.

8. *For the poor.* Her large beneficence was to be justified against the shallow pretence of Judas, because very few opportunities of serving Him thus personally in the flesh remained—while always they would have the poor to help by their daily charities. Mark adds an explanatory clause—“Whosoever ye will, ye may do them good.” Ch. 14: 7.

9. John has given a brief account of the Supper in vs 2-8, inclusive—though it belongs in the history four days later—on Wednesday. He now proceeds with the narrative, and this verse connects properly with vs. 1. ¶ *Much people.* The people were moved to inquire the same evening after Christ, by the fame of such a miracle. This popular movement in favor of our Lord troubled the chief priests. See vs. 10. There was also a strong desire to see the wonderful man who was alive from the dead. Bengel remarks, “Who would not have gone to Bethany to see Lazarus?” This man was a living witness to Christ's Divinity: and it was natural and lawful that the

10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also <sup>a</sup> to death ;

11 Because that <sup>b</sup> by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

¶ 12 On <sup>c</sup> the next day much people that were come

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 16. 31. <sup>b</sup> c. 11. 45. ver. 18. <sup>c</sup> Matt. 21. 8, &c. Mar. 11. 8, &c. Lu. 19. 36, &c.

people should wish to see him as well as Jesus. OBSERVE—Christians lately converted are often the most convincing proofs of Christ's Almighty work, and men naturally are much affected by their presence and evidence.

10. *Consulted.* This does not mean that they formally decided so to do—but only counseled, conferred together about it. These may have been Sadducees, who hated so the doctrine of the resurrection as to feel specially enraged, and anxious to put Lazarus out of the way. They were determined not to believe in Christ, yet they could not disprove the miracle which was so testified to by those who knew the facts. The facts were such as could not be deceptive. The mass of the unprejudiced people were satisfied that the miracle was wrought. Therefore, rather than give up their opposition to Christ, these chief priests begin to think of murdering the innocent man who had been just raised from the dead, that so they might set aside the powerful and convincing evidence in Christ's favor. Men would willingly blot out the evidence of Christ's Divinity rather than receive His claims: and such is the hatred and malice of the human heart, that it will seek to destroy the truth, and blot out the evidence, even though it be by murdering the innocent. Bloody persecutions of Christians can be accounted for by this mad opposition to the truth which they profess. This is here declared to be the reason of their cruel movement. vs. 11. ¶ *Lazarus also*—As well as Jesus, whom they were determined already to kill.

to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, <sup>a</sup> Hosanna : Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. 118. 25, 26.

## PART VII.

*Our Lord's Public Entry into Jerusalem, and the subsequent Transactions before the Fourth Passover.*

Time, Five Days.

§112. OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.—*Bethany—Jerusalem.*

First day of the week.

| Matt.     | Mark      | Luke.     | John.     |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 21: 1-11. | 11: 1-11. | 19: 29-44 | 12: 12-19 |
| 14-17.    |           |           |           |

12-19. See explanations of this passage in Notes on Matthew and Mark and Luke, where the details are more fully given. ¶ *On the next day.* This, according to our reckoning of the days, would be the first day of the week (Sunday.) They may have hoped that such a public demonstration of theirs would induce him to appear openly as the Messiah, or they may have had such an expectation at any rate—and so they used such tokens of honor as were paid to oriental kings. On the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews were commanded to take palm branches, and rejoice before the Lord their God. Levit. 23: 40.

13. *Branches.* Literally, *the branches of the palm trees*—showing that they were there on the road—or referring to the custom. Branches of the palm, in blossom, were broken off and strewn upon the road. Garments also were spread in the way. These were tokens of honor such as were shown to eastern kings. The Targum (Esther 10: 15) says, “When Mordecai went forth from the gate of the king, the streets were covered with myrtle, and the

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is <sup>a</sup> written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things <sup>b</sup> understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, <sup>c</sup> then remembered <sup>d</sup> they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

<sup>a</sup> Zec. 9. 9. <sup>b</sup> Lu. 19. 31. <sup>c</sup> c. 7. 30. <sup>d</sup> c. 14. 26.

porches with purple." See Rev. 7: 9, 10. They sang a jubilant passage from Ps. 118, which was sung at the Feast of Tabernacles, and at the Pass-over, and had a Messianic interpretation attached to it. As to the object of this triumphal entry, it was to show, 1. The accomplishment in Him of that remarkable prophecy of Zechariah, (9: 9,) which in its connections also would explain His Messiahship—2. He here received what by Divine right belonged to Him. It was the popular acknowledgment of His claims as Messiah. They looked for a political conqueror. He showed that He could thus reign if He had so chosen.

14. *When He had found.* The particulars are given by the other Evangelists, which John seems to suppose familiar to his readers.

15. See Notes on Matt. 21: 5.

16. It would seem from this, that it was not until the Holy Spirit was given, after Jesus was glorified, that this passage occurred to them as so fulfilled. When they received the Spirit's illumination at and after the outpouring at Pentecost, such passages of prophecy were brought to their minds in connection with the events, and the wonderful meaning of the whole was clear to them. It needs the Spirit of truth to shine upon the inspired page, and to shine in our hearts, to give us to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 For <sup>e</sup> this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive <sup>f</sup> ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him

<sup>e</sup> ver. 11. <sup>f</sup> c. 11. 47, 48.

of Jesus Christ. ¶ *Was glorified.* The Holy Spirit was not given until Jesus was glorified (7: 39) by His resurrection and ascension.

17, 18. These verses give a simple account of the reason for this popular movement and public testimony. It was the fact of their having seen or heard of this miracle. "The people," in vs. 17, are distinguished as those who had seen the miracle. They bore witness of what they had seen. Hence, another band of people was led to go out to meet Him, (vs. 12,) because they had heard of this wonderful work thus testified to by eye-witnesses. Bengel thinks these two classes of people are spoken of by Matthew and Mark as those *who went before* and those *who followed after*.

19. This popularity of our Lord was just what troubled the Jewish rulers—and it was just what they wished by all means to stop. ¶ *Perceive ye.* They seem to have spoken peevishly, fretfully and almost despairingly among themselves; convinced most overwhelmingly by the crowd of followers, that all their plans were powerless to stop the rush after Christ. They can only take more effectual measures. Ch. 11: 53. ¶ *Prevail.* Literally—profit, gain nothing—get no advantage. ¶ *The world.* This they say indignantly and impatiently—as we would say, "*everybody*" has gone. ¶ *Is gone after Him.* Have become His followers. The other



¶ 20 And there were certain <sup>a</sup> Greeks among them that <sup>b</sup> came up to worship at the feast :

21 The same came therefore to <sup>c</sup> Philip, which *was* of Bethsaida

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 17. 4. <sup>b</sup> Ro. 1. 16. <sup>c</sup> 1 Ki. 8. 41 42. <sup>c</sup> c. 1. 44.

Evangelists here relate the cleansing of the temple, and several parables spoken by our Lord which belong properly before this paragraph, which is given by John alone.

¶ 125. CERTAIN GREEKS DESIRE TO SEE JESUS.—*Jerusalem.*

Third day of the week.

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 12.20-36. |

20. *Greeks.* These were not Greek Jews—Jews speaking Greek—as some have supposed—though there were many such. But these were Gentiles, who were accustomed to worship not only their own gods, but the gods of the city or region into which they had come. They also brought offerings to Jerusalem, and frequently attended the great feasts of the Jews. See Lightfoot. Hence, there was in the temple, “the court of the Gentiles,” so called by appointment of Solomon. 1 Kings 8: 41. It is more probable, however, that these Gentiles were proselytes of the gate—who, it seems, were *accustomed to go up* and worship at the feast. In the time of our Lord, many of the Pagans joined themselves to the Jewish religion so far as to observe the seven precepts of Noah, as they were called. Juvenal speaks of “the Judaizing Romans” in his Satires. Seneca says that so many of them had passed over to the Jewish worship, that Judaism was adopted through all the earth. In the Acts, such are mentioned as specially ready to receive religious instruction, and they seem to have had an inward longing after divine things.

21. *Philip.* Why they came to Philip is not stated. It may have been for no special reason, or, because they knew he was from Galilee. This may account for his being spoken of here as *from Bethsaida, in Galilee.* His name

of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them,

has a Greek form, and may imply that he had Greek relatives. If these Greeks had been from the neighborhood of Bethsaida, we may suppose that they would have been familiar with the person of Jesus. ¶ *Would see.* Literally—*We wish to see.* They had heard of Christ, and perhaps had seen something of His triumphal entry at Jerusalem, and were led by curiosity, as Zaccheus, or by desire to learn something more of Him, to make this inquiry. “These men set forth from the West, at the close of Jesus’ life, just as the Magi came from the East, at the commencement. But they come to the *cross* of the king as those came to His cradle.”—*Stier, Red. 1, v. 78.* Those who seek Christ, must inquire of His word and of His people, and use the proper means—must go where He is to be found, and consult His ministers. No one should be ashamed to express his desires or anxieties, if he wishes to find Christ.

22. They must have desired to speak with Jesus especially, and not merely to see Him—as Philip has some doubt, apparently, about introducing these Gentiles to Jesus. He tells Andrew, who was a near friend, as being from the same town of Bethsaida. ¶ *Tell Jesus.* These disciples did not seem ready to act upon their own individual judgment, in a case which would seem to us so clear. Yet we do not know the particular object of the inquirers, except so far as we may infer it from the discourse of our Lord. We learn at least (1,) how we are to treat inquirers. Instead of depending on our own judgment or skill, we are to *tell* Jesus: and (2,) how we are to treat the Master, with profoundest reverence on all occasions.

23. It is not said whether the Greeks

saying, The hour is <sup>a</sup> come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>b</sup> Except a corn of wheat

<sup>a</sup> c. 13. 32; 17. 1. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 36.

were admitted to converse with Jesus, but it seems probable that these words were spoken to Philip and Andrew in reply, and in the hearing of the strangers and of the disciples. It may have been indeed after receiving the Greeks and conversing with them, that this discourse was delivered. His answer was suggested by the appearing of these Gentiles. "He is led to look upon these heathen hungering after salvation, as the first fruits of that abundant harvest which His death would produce."—*Tholuck*. ¶ *The hour is come*. The time has arrived. Often it had been noted that "*His hour was not yet come*." Ch. 7: 30; 8: 20. The glorification of Christ by His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to Heaven, stood connected with the conversion of the Gentiles. These Gentile inquirers, therefore, made His heart leap at the thought of all that was to be accomplished through His death for the Gentile world, and which now was so near at hand. ¶ *That—In order that—for this purpose, that He should be*. ¶ *The Son of Man*. This title our Lord here gives to Himself as most appropriate to the case. It was as Mediator that He was to be glorified with the Father—as the God incarnate, having undertaken for sinful man, and having now accomplished the work given Him to do. Ch. 17: 1-5. Our Lord seems plainly to refer to the hour of His death, as leading to that of His glory. Luke 24: 26.

24. Most solemnly He now sets forth the method by which He was to introduce the glories of His kingdom—not—as they had supposed from His triumphal entry into Jerusalem—by setting up His throne there in great earthly splendor, but most amazingly, *by death*. This He illustrates by reference to the laws of the vegetable kingdom. This He shows so beautifully, to encour-

age them when they should see Him shortly led forth to a violent death. His death was only *in order* to His being glorified, in the publishing of the gospel among the Gentiles, and in the conversion of the nations. ¶ *Corn of wheat—Grain of wheat*. ¶ *And die*. It is through death unto life. Just as a grain of wheat does not germinate unless it falls into the ground, and dies there, so that the outer covering rots off and leaves the germ to spring up—so He could not set up His glorious kingdom except *by dying*, as they would afterwards see—Heb. 2: 9; Phil. 2: 8, 9; Heb. 12: 2; Eph. 1: 20, 23. They should not be troubled at His coming death, for by this very means they should see His kingdom spring up and spread abroad, just as a seed, cast in the ground, shoots forth and produces fruit. And this is just as absolutely necessary in one case as in the other, and would be as satisfactory. It was only by giving His life a ransom—a vicarious sacrifice—that men were to be saved. His triumphant ascension should procure the Spirit's influence for men. "Christ died alone—He rose again with many."—*Bede*. OBSERVE—The whole world furnishes a mighty parable, to which the gospel is the clue: as—"When thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be but *bare* (mere) *grain*; it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain;" so also is the resurrection of the dead a *sowing* of the body. 1 Cor. 15: 37, 42.

25 He <sup>c</sup> that loveth his life shall

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 10. 39; 16. 25. Mar. 8. 35. Lu. 9. 24; 17. 33.

fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25. This same Divine law applies to the disciples as well as to the Master. See Notes Matt. 10: 39; Luke 9: 24. His kingdom was to be carried on by the instrumentality of His disciples—and only as they submitted to self-loathing, and self-sacrifice could they attain to everlasting life and glory. Trials were before them, and it was by

lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If <sup>a</sup> any man serve me, let him follow me; and where <sup>b</sup> I

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 6. 46. c. 14. 15. 1 Jno. 5. 3. <sup>b</sup> c. 14. 3; 17. 24. 1 Th. 4. 17.

presenting body and spirit a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, (Rom. 12: 1,) that they should truly live, and live eternally. ¶ *Hateth*. That is, comparatively—his life in *this world as compared with his life in the other world*. He who values his present, temporal living less than his eternal well-being, is the one who shall *keep*—or as the term is, shall *guard* his life as by armed military defences. We must die unto sin and live unto righteousness. “If we must die in order to bring forth fruit, we ought to patiently submit to being mortified by God.”—*Calvin*.

26. This applies to these and all others who might wish to enter His service. Those who would serve Him must follow Him through tribulation into glory. So when He commands us “Follow Me”—it is with this cheering prospect of entering with Him into heaven, whither He has gone as our forerunner. What matters the roughness of the way, so as that we are going by the path He traveled, and are soon triumphantly to enter after Him into His rest. ¶ *Where I am*. That is, where I belong—in Heaven—and where I shall soon eternally be, *there* shall also my servant be. As he follows Me, so he shall share my joy and glory. Ch. 14: 3; 17: 24. “If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him.” ¶ *Honour*. A great word is this, says Bengel, agreeing with the term “glorified” in vs. 23. The servant and follower of Christ is here promised to be honored by His Father—to be a sharer of His own rewards and joys, and thus he should follow Him into everlasting glory.

27. *Troubled*. He had just now warned them against loving, inordinately, life, (ease and convenience,) and had exhorted them to disregard it for

am, there shall also my servant be: if <sup>a</sup> any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

27 Now <sup>a</sup> is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father,

<sup>c</sup> 1 Sa. 2. 30. Pr. 27. 18. <sup>d</sup> Matt. 26. 38, 39. Lu. 12. 50. c. 13. 21.

His sake. And now He gives expression to His own self-sacrifice, and shows how entirely He yields up His own life for men. He could not atone for sin without taking upon Him our condemnation. And this sent the shudder and horror to His holy soul, that He was standing in the sinners' place, and was soon to take the stroke of justice due to rebel men. He was possessed of human feelings in their perfect purity and repugnance to sin; and we cannot conceive what must have been the shrinking of His refined human nature at the prospect of suffering the condemnation of man's sin. Luke 23: 41-44. ¶ *What*. As though He could not find words to express His agony—and as though He was driven to such an extremity as not to know what to say—rather shrinking within from the dreadful bitterness which He saw was to come upon Him. “This struggle of choice is a prelude of the struggle in Gethsemane. The horror of death and the ardor of obedience here met.”—*Bengel*. It was not a shrinking from mere bodily sufferings, for He had exhorted His disciples to boldness and endurance in face of every torture. It was an inward, overcoming sense of the divine wrath which He had to endure as a substitute for sinners. “The sufferings of His soul were the soul of His sufferings.” ¶ *Father save me*. Shall I say this? This is the struggle of His soul under these inward sufferings. Shall I ask the Father to relieve me from this work that I have undertaken, or from this bitter hour to which it brings me? This was doubtless the natural prompting of His flesh. This course he could have taken. Matt. 26: 53. His human nature was keenly alive to all these woes which He was to endure. And should He seek now to escape? Just

save me from this hour: but <sup>a</sup> for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name.

*a c. 18. 37.*

so His soul shrank in Gethsemane under the agonies which now already He forefelt. And the experience in the garden wrung from Him the very cry for a moment which instantly He checked, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." It was allowed Him so to express Himself that we might see how overwhelming were His afflictions for our sins—and that in this light, His willing obedience might appear to all. ¶ *But for this cause.* Thus plainly does He declare what it was that prevented Him from seeking deliverance from His coming agony and death. It was the very thing He came to accomplish, viz—to die for sinners—and, therefore, He could not and would not draw back. He gave Himself for us. His death was voluntary, and for the great object of redemption, which could not otherwise have been secured. Luke 23: 42. This was the will of the Father which He came to execute—and this language agrees with what He said in the garden—"Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

28. *Father, glorify, &c.* "By these words He testifies that He prefers the glory of the Father to all things else."—*Calvin.* He would have the Father's name glorified in the scheme of Redemption—and this was the object of His work and obedience even unto death. Let thy wisdom—thy righteousness—thy faithfulness—thy mercy, be manifest in this plan, and let thy perfections all shine forth gloriously in the accomplishment of salvation for an innumerable multitude. Especially let the principles of thy government be displayed in not sparing thy Son, thine only Son, but delivering Him up as a sacrificial victim for sinners. ¶ *A voice.* It was doubtless an audible sound, though the words were not heard by all. ¶ *I have.* This is the history of all the past, and will charac-

Then came there a voice <sup>b</sup> from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

29 The people therefore, that

*b Matt. 3. 17.*

terize all the future. The Father had glorified His name, in all temporal events, from the beginning. Christ in history is a revelation of the Divine glory. The preparations for His coming in the ancient dispensation—His incarnation—His baptism and miracles, and all His work, had been a manifestation of the Divine glory. ¶ *And will.*—Especially in His resurrection and ascension.—And so would all the future course of our Lord prove a revelation of the Father's perfections in the salvation of men—the unfolding of a plan corresponding with all the preparations—"the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation." Literally, the reading is, "I have both glorified and will glorify" (my name.) See ch. 17: 5. OBSERVE—The Father and the Son are here plainly distinguished as distinct persons in the Godhead. They who teach that the Son is only a manifestation of the Father, and not a distinct subsistence, are in grievous error.

29. *The people.* Some of the multitude of bystanders. As the sound came from above, in tones of majesty, some, taking it only in the lowest natural way, understood it to be thunder. How men can misunderstand, if they know nothing of God's words. Many are ready always to refer God's plainest manifestations to natural causes and events. They make nature to be God: and make God to be nothing more than nature. ¶ *Angel.* These others take rather a higher view of the matter, and understand it as something spoken to our Lord by an angel. This agrees with the Jewish notion that God always spake to men by the ministry of angels. They did not doubt that something was uttered. See Heb. 2: 2; Gal. 3: 19. OBSERVE—Such a barren *naturalism* as finds in the *voice of God* nothing more than a *clap of thunder*, finds no life nor salva-

stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but \* for your sakes.

a c. 11. 42.

tion in the Gospel. Yet this is the low view of some who, "professing to be wise, become fools," &c. Rom. 1.

30. He does not say that the answer came not for His sake, but that *the voice*—the *audible utterance*—was not needed by Him. He had the secret assurance in His own soul. The Father and He were one. This miraculous revelation was for their benefit, that they might hear and understand—and that, by such a direct manifestation of the Father in answer to Him, they might be convinced that He was one with the Father, and that His work was approved in Heaven. So, at the grave of Lazarus, He spake to the Father audibly—because of the people that stood by—"that they might believe that thou hast sent me." Ch. 11: 42. ¶ *For your sakes.* How tender was His regard for these who were so vainly speculating about what they would not understand nor believe.

31. *The judgment.* In the Greek the word is *crisis*. Our Lord here already rises to a view of His triumph. Just as at Gethsemane, when He bowed His soul in obedient submission to the will of the Father, He was able to say to His disciples, "Sleep on now," &c., and to go cheerfully forward to trial and to death. He had just said, Now is my soul troubled. Here He has gotten beyond this inward agony, and says, Now is the judgment, &c. He viewed His death as about to accomplish such grand results. This was what the Spirit was to convince men of—"Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged." Ch. 16: 11. He could not have meant that this was the general and final judgment—nor that this was the judgment which the world would pass upon Him. But now comes on the issue of the great con-

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall <sup>b</sup> the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted <sup>c</sup> up from the earth, will draw all <sup>d</sup> men unto me.

<sup>b</sup> Lu. 10. 18. c. 16. 11. Ac. 26. 18. Ep. 2. 2. c c. 8. 23. <sup>d</sup> Ro. 5. 18.

dict between "the Prince of this world"—"the rulers of the darkness of this world"—(Eph. 6: 12)—the usurping and unlawful "God of this world"—and MYSELF, the true and rightful King. The Son of Man was about to be glorified by "spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross." Col. 2: 15. Satan's lawless and cruel dominion was to be broken down, and he was to be cast out. This glorious consummation He foresaw with the ingathering of the Gentiles, and the triumphant dominion of the Redeemer. Thus our Lord should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3: 15) in the very event in which the serpent should bruise His heel. ¶ *The prince*, &c. Satan is a real person. He is called also "the god of this world." This he is, not of right, but because he is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"—(Eph. 2: 2)—because he actually at present rules and controls the great majority of men, and has always done so. See ch. 14: 30; 16: 11; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Ephes. 6: 12, ¶ *Be cast out.* This was to be done by the power of the Holy Spirit, taking away his dominion and casting him out from his unlawful rule of men's hearts. This result could be secured only by Christ's death—"leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men." The consummation would be gradually brought about. But the result was virtually attained in His death. See Luke 10: 18; Col. 1: 18-20. Acts 26: 18; 1 Cor. 15: 25, 26; Rev. 20: 14. Here is a fulfillment of the first promise, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Gen. 3: 15.

32. *Be lifted up.* The same term is

33 (This he said, signifying <sup>a</sup> what death he should die.)

34 The people answered him, We have heard <sup>b</sup> out of the law <sup>c</sup>

a c. 18. 32. b Ps. 69. 36, 37; 110. 4. Is. 9. 7. c Ro. 5. 12.

that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

used in ch. 3: 14, and ch. 8: 28. Here it may even point further and include His glorification; though the main idea is that of His death—His lifting up upon the cross—which would carry along with it the reward of His soul's travail, in the salvation of multitudes. The "*if*" does not express here any doubt or uncertainty. It is elsewhere so employed to signify rather the certainty—as *sure as I shall be lifted up*. In Ephes. 3: 2, it has this meaning: "If ye have heard" means, *since ye have heard*. ¶ *Will draw*. The term here used signifies a *gentle but effectual drawing*. It is different from the word to *draw by violence—to drag*. "Thy people shall be *willing* in the day of *thy power*." Ps. 110. He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Him. ¶ *All*. The word "*men*" is not expressed in the Greek, but is implied—as the "*all*," is *masculine*—and refers first of all to persons. The Father is said to *draw* men before Christ's death. Ch. 6: 44. But Christ when "*lifted up*," should draw to HIMSELF. The term is, TO MYSELF. The crucified, expiating Saviour would be the great object of faith. Ch. 11: 52. The term "*all*" here used in reference to men, means all without *distinction*; not all without *exception*—all nations, and not the Jews alone. The old Latin translation reads, "I will draw ALL THINGS to me." But the term is *masculine*. Yet the universal term is used to signify how extensively this drawing should be carried on, including *things* as well as men—all agencies and resources—and it is elsewhere said that "He shall gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." Eph. 1: 10. The verse which immediately follows, (33) shows that this was spoken in regard to the mode and results of His death. This was the

way in which Satan was to be spoiled of his dominion over men. His Spirit was to be outpoured, and men were to be *drawn* by almighty constraints. The ideas included are—1. That all men without exception should become the subjects of His mediatorial government.—2. That all men, without distinction, should become the objects of His invitations in the Gospel.—3. That all whom the Father has given Him, should be put in possession of the blessings of His salvation.—*Brown*. His death should make a full atonement for sin—open the way to the universal offer, and procure the gift of the Holy Spirit as the all-sufficient influence for drawing all classes of sinners to Him. It is not meant to say that He will constrain all men to actually embrace His salvation—and we know from Scripture and from observation that all men are not saved. But He has provided for bringing His own people to embrace Him, in a way that is perfectly consistent with their freedom, and makes them free. They are *drawn*, not driven. OBSERVE—The attractions of THE cross. Christ by His cross will draw to Himself not only men of all classes and climes, but all human interests and resources—all commerce—all enterprise—all art and science—all wealth and power in the world. Hence, His loving church is described as singing, "Draw me, we will run after thee." Sol. Song 1: 4.

33. The "*lifting up*" was a prophetic allusion to the mode of His death by crucifixion. Literally, it reads, "by what death He was about to die." Ch. 18: 32, refers to this; and John, after the event, understands the reference distinctly, and here throws in this explanation.

34. They reply to His remark about His coming death, that He cannot be the Messiah for this very reason, that

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little time is the light <sup>a</sup> with you. <sup>b</sup> Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he <sup>c</sup> that walketh in dark-

<sup>a</sup> c. 8. 12. <sup>b</sup> Jer. 13. 16. <sup>c</sup> c. 11. 10.

the Messiah of the Law, (the Old Testament,) is represented as "abiding," or continuing forever. They referred to passages such as Ps. 89: 6; 36: 37; 110: 4; Ezek. 37: 25; Isa. 9: 7; Dan. 7: 12, 14. They overlooked, however, the other class of passages which represented Him as a suffering, dying Messiah. Isa. 53. Yet the Jews applied these latter passages to Christ before He came. ¶ *How sayest thou.* He had not used these terms on this occasion, but in the parallel declaration to Nicodemus. Ch. 3: 14. See Ch. 8: 28. ¶ *Who is.* They pretend not to know to whom He can refer, and ask whom He means by the title "Son of Man," as applied to such a case—hinting too that *this* "Son of Man," *this dying Son of Man* is not, and cannot be the same as was described in their scriptures. This was not a common title of the Messiah, as we infer, though the prophets had plainly designated Him as to be a man. Zech. 6: 12. And in Dan. 7: 13, the very title is found, "Son of Man," and is thus quoted by our Lord. Matt. 24: 30; 26: 64. See Ps. 80: 17.

35. In this reply our Lord answers them, not directly, but indirectly, speaking of Himself as *the Light*, and exhorting them to make a faithful use of His presence. The prophets had spoken of the Messiah as *the Light* that was to lighten the Gentiles. See Ch. 8: 12; 9: 4, 5. And He would not stop to argue with them further, but only urge upon them their duty, in view of their opportunity as fast passing away. If, in their reference to the Old Testament, they had thought of Ps. 89: 36, this answer of our Lord is a happy turn given to the subject. "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne *as the sun* before me." ¶ *With you—Or, amongst you.* Ch. 1:

ness, knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be <sup>d</sup> the children of light. These things

<sup>d</sup> Ep. 5. 8.

4-9. ¶ *Walk.* He alluded to the fact that soon He was to leave the world, and instead of caviling about His death, and using it as an objection against His Messiahship, they should make the best use of His instructions and invitations. They would understand the figure from His frequent use of it in reference to Himself. ¶ *While ye have.* He did not refer only to His departure from the world, but also to the continuance of their opportunities as a nation. ¶ *Lest darkness.* This He warned them of—the approaching darkness which was to come upon this rebellious nation—and the darkness that must sooner or later overtake all who do not improve the light. They who work not while it is day will find the night coming upon them, in which no man can work. Ch. 9: 4. ¶ *Come upon you—overtake you by surprise.* See 1 Thess. 5: 4; Jer. 13: 16. "Darkness is here the period when the Salvation is no longer personally among them, the result of which is, that the step is no longer secure." ¶ *Knoweth not.* This is the disadvantage if their *walking*, (or attending to their highest concerns,) should be postponed till after the Light had gone away from them. He who walketh in the darkness of natural ignorance and sinful prejudice, without the Light of the Sun of Righteousness, has no security—walks without knowing where his course leads, or will end, or how soon he may step into destruction.

36. *While ye have light.* Rather, "the Light." They ought earnestly to believe in Him as the true Light, while they had the benefit of His Personal instruction and of His gospel invitation. This was the only way in which they could become the children of light. Ch. 1: 12; 8: 12; Ephes. 5: 8. "Now are ye light in the Lord.

spake Jesus and departed, and did hide himself from them.

¶ 37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which

he spake, \* Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said <sup>b</sup> again,

a Is. 53. 1. b Is. 6. 9, 10.

Walk as children of the light.” ¶ *Departed.* He probably went to Bethany. Luke 21: 37. But it is very significantly said that He “*did hide Himself from them.*” Already while He warned them to receive His instructions with a believing spirit, He withdrew. Men often cavil amidst all God’s faithful warnings, and while they cavil, He departs—hides Himself from them. Yet while He withdraws, He utters His entreaty to believe. By this withdrawal He signified what should afterwards occur to them. Matt. 23: 39. How sadly the Jews now grope in darkness! So do many Gentile unbelievers who boast of having most abundant Light. “Professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools.”

The FIRST DIVISION of John’s narrative is now drawing to a close, with some general reflections of the Evangelist, (vss. 37–43,) and with a summary of Christ’s commission, vss. 43–50. Thus far he has *given the History of Christ’s glorification by His acts, discourses and conflict with the Jews.* From this he passes in ch. 13, to show the manifestation of His glory, in His sufferings, death and resurrection. See *Introduction*—“*Object.*”

§ 126. REFLECTIONS UPON THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS.—*Jerusalem.*

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 12.37-50. |

37. The Evangelist, who had lived to see the threatened desolations come upon the Jewish people, traces here the righteous fulfillment back to their unbelief. He refers back to the abundant evidence which Christ had

given them, in His frequent miraculous works to confirm His Divine mission, and to prove His Divinity. ¶ *So many.* This term may mean rather *so great*, as in Matt. 8: 10. But miracles both great and many He had wrought. See ch. 9: 16; 15: 24. ¶ *Before them.* Before the Jewish people. ¶ *They believed not.* The majority of them believed not. This fact of His not having been received by His own countrymen, might be brought up in evidence against His claims, as though they had not been well supported. But it was not for lack of miracles, but in defiance of them, and notwithstanding every such testimony from on high. This the Evangelist would have to be well understood, as the ministry of Christ was now drawing to a close.

38. *That the saying.* Isa. 53: 1. “John does not mean that the prediction laid a necessity on the Jews: for Isaiah (53: 1; see Rom. 10: 16) uttered nothing but what the Lord revealed to him from the secret treasures of His purposes. Indeed it must have happened, though the prophet had not spoken of it.”—*Calvin.* This event is here noted as a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prediction. That he referred to the times of the Messiah, and to this very unbelief of the Jews, is plain from the whole passage. Of course the result did not take place in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled—but the result was foreseen by God, and in the Divine counsel it formed one feature of that comprehensive purpose which covers all issues and events. Chrysostom well remarks: “It was not because Isaiah said so, that they did not believe, but because they would not believe Isaiah said this.”

39. “In this passage he speaks of



40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

the hardness by which God punishes the wickedness of an ungrateful people."—*Calvin*. ¶ *They could not*. There was an inability to believe. This is explained in the words that follow. It grew out of a blindness of mind and hardness of heart. It was no less an inability because it was one of the mind and heart. This is the very kind of inability belonging to the case. They were not idiots nor madmen. Yet they are not to be excused because their resistance of the light was so stubborn that they could not see. ¶ *Because that*. The Jewish people were they whose character was described by Isaiah, and therefore, in the circumstances, it could not be that they would believe. They were the people to whom this prophecy applied. ¶ *Said again*. Isa. 6: 9, 10.

40. *He hath blinded, &c.* Here God is represented as having an agency in this sad result. The passage of the prophet explains this. He is there ordered to "Go and make the heart of that people fat," &c.—that is, to do what would surely have this effect—to go on preaching where the result would be only to harden the people and blind them with the very light itself. Yet this was no fault of his preaching, or of the light, but the fault of their own unbelief, because this was foreseen as the result of God's dealings and teachings, that they should only grow harder and blinder. He is spoken of here as directly doing what was only the consequence of His kindest treatment, and because of the wickedness of their hearts. ¶ *That*. So that this is the result and not the object of God's dealing. God did not interfere to prevent them from seeing, &c., but He purposely permitted them to go on and resist the truth, and suf-

41 These things said Esaias, when <sup>a</sup> he saw his glory, and spake of him:

42 Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but <sup>b</sup> because of the Pharisees they

<sup>a</sup> Is. 6. 1.    <sup>b</sup> c. 9. 22.

fer all the hardening consequences. His dealings were abused by them to the same effect, so that this result was realized—of their *not seeing*, &c. A fearful curse of sin is this—that it has a natural tendency to wax worse and worse. ¶ *Be converted*, &c. Literally, *convert* or *turn*, in the active sense. While it is true that men *are regenerated* (i. e. passively by God's act) it is also true that in consequence of this, they do *turn* actively. The hardening process goes on in conformity with the laws of the natural mind and heart. The contrary process is indicated here. If they had seen and understood the truth, and had turned from their evil way, He would have healed them.

41. That Isaiah really spake of these very times of Christ, is here stated. Therefore, the passage was truly a prediction of what came to pass under the Evangelist's eye. It was a prophecy of the rejection of Christ the Messiah, by His own people. John had been led by the Spirit to see also that Isaiah was in that context, (ch. 6,) speaking of the same person of whom John here speaks, viz—of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet the prophet calls Him Jehovah—and says that he saw Him. He could have seen only the Schecinah, whose glory filled the temple. This was the visible manifestation of Jehovah, which symbolized the Lord Jesus, "who is the brightness of the Father's glory." Therefore, John says it was the Messiah's glory that Isaiah saw—and, of course, he thus declares that Christ, of whom he himself was speaking, was the Jehovah whom Isaiah saw. See 1 Cor. 10: 4. "No man hath seen God at any time." But Isaiah says that he saw Jehovah. Isa. 6: 5—and, hence, it must have been the only-begotten

did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 For <sup>a</sup> they loved the praise of

α c. 5. 44. Ro. 2. 29.

Son that he saw, who hath revealed or manifested the Father. Here is a direct and clear proof of the divinity of our Lord.

42. *Nevertheless.* Though the people as a body, rejected Christ, yet some believed in the way here stated.

¶ *Chief rulers.* These were not such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and others, members of the Sanhedrim or chief council. For that this belief was not of a saving nature, or such as was required, is manifest from its operation. It did not lead to self-denying devotedness. They had a conviction of His claims so far as to have yielded to the evidence of His miracles. They believed Him to be a teacher sent from God, as Nicodemus did at the first, (ch. 3: 1,) but they were not savingly enlightened by our Lord's inward teaching, as Nicodemus afterwards was. ¶ *The Pharisees.* These were the bitter opposers of our Lord, and their influence was supreme in the council. ¶ *Confess Him.* Make a public profession of adherence to Him as Nicodemus and Joseph did. Ch. 19: 38, 39. ¶ *Be put out.* They had passed a decree that if any man did confess Christ, he should be excommunicated. This was a serious damage. See ch. 9: 22, and Notes.

43. *For.* The reason for their declining to confess Christ before opposers is here given. They cared more for human applause than for the approbation of God. The term here rendered "praise," means, commonly, *honor or glory*, and the passage refers back to that saying of our Lord, where the same word is used, (ch. 5: 44,) where He showed the great hindrance in the way of men's believing in Him, if their position or disposition led them to live on the popular favor, and to "receive honor, ("praise") one of another, instead of that which cometh from God

men more than the praise of God.

44 Jesus cried and said, He <sup>b</sup> that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

δ Mar. 9. 37. 1 Pe. 1. 21.

only." These were public men—high in office—and they could not face the opposition and scorn which they must incur by confessing Christ. They had rather wait to see if He would not yet come forth as a political deliverer, and temporal king, so that it might be safe to confess Him. Men who occupy public office and "receive honor ("praise") one of another, without seeking the honor that cometh from God only," are still exposed to the same temptation of rejecting Christ's claims. This is the danger of political life. Many chief rulers are afraid to confess Christ publicly for fear of opposers—and lest they should be put out of political society and office on this account by offending the open enemies of Christianity. Yet public men are entrusted with a great influence and a weighty responsibility—and their open profession of Christ has a great effect upon the public mind. They are bound to use this influence for Christ. God records in Heaven the reason of their declining to own Christ before men, just as it is here recorded. The duty of professing Christ before men is plainly laid down in the Scriptures. If there were no public professors of Him, there could be no church and no ordinances, and the religion of Christ could not be kept up among men. Therefore, it is required of those who hope in Christ and receive Him as a Saviour, to acknowledge Him publicly, and to strengthen the church and cause of Christ on earth by their open testimony. "With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10: 10.

44. John here adds the testimony of our Lord to the same effect, and thus confirms his remarks in the preceding verses, about the unbelief of the people. These words may be a continuation of our Lord's discourse, (vs. 36,) which was there cut short, or they may be gath-

45 And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I <sup>a</sup> am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear my

a c. 1. 5; 3. 19.

cred from His previous discourses, as already given by John. The terms, however, seem to imply that this solemn language was delivered on this occasion. He "*cried and said,*" *repeating in substance His previous testimonies in a kind of summary as He drew near, now, to the close of His labors with the unbelieving multitude, and was about to give Himself more exclusively to the edification and comforting of His disciples.* His claims were really the claims of the Father, also, whom the Jews professed to worship. And so the believing in Him was not confined to Him, but was essential to a proper belief in the Father Himself. So He said afterwards to His disciples. "Ye believe in God—believe also in Me." This doctrine He had constantly urged upon this disbelieving people who so falsely professed their belief in Jehovah. He did the same works as the Father did, and this passage declares His essential oneness with the Father. Ch. 5: 17, 20, 36; ch. 10: 25–37. He taught the very doctrine which He was sent to teach. Ch. 5: 20–23; 30: 8–38.

45. *Seeth, &c.* This is something further. This was as much as to say, in the strongest, plainest terms, that He was so positively one with the Father, that whoever saw Him, did really see the Father. So He said to Philip, when he asked Him saying, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Ch. 14: 8. He had come to show the Father. He was "the express image of His person"—as the wax bears the express image of the seal.

46. *A light, &c.* So in vs. 35 He had referred to Himself as the Light which they might improve if they would. John calls Him the true Light. The term as applied to Christ is not the same as applied to John the Bap-

20\*

words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came <sup>b</sup> not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, <sup>c</sup> hath one that judgeth him: the word that

b c. 3. 17. c De. 18. 19. Lu. 9. 26.

tist, who, though he was a burning and shining light—was only a *lamp* or *lantern*, that needed to be lighted up, and did not shine of itself. Christ now professes again that He comes as the "Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel." Luke 2: 32. In ch. 8: 12, He called Himself "the Light of the world." See ch. 1: 9; 3: 19. ¶ *That.* This was His gracious object—to give men light upon their path. Reason and philosophy cannot give us the light necessary for salvation. He "brought life and immortality to light," in the gospel. Hence, "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Ch. 3: 19. ¶ *Abide*—remain, continue. This implies that men are in darkness by nature. See ch. 3: 36. The object of our Lord in coming into the world, was to provide a way of escape from natural ignorance and error, so that men should not remain in their original estate of sin and misery. The term darkness is used to signify sin and error, as in John 3: 19; 1 John 1: 5. It denotes also the misery of God's withdrawalment. Ch. 8: 12.

47. *I judge him not.* This remark is qualified and explained by what immediately follows. It was not Christ's object or pleasure now to punish men, but to provide for their salvation. Instead of destroying the race for the sinfulness of that estate into which they fell, He came in order that they might not perish but have eternal life. He came not to judge the world at this time, but to save the world. Hereafter He will come as Judge of quick and dead.

48. *The word, &c.* This solemn forewarning was most appropriate to the

I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment,

close of our Lord's labors with this unbelieving people. It would not need that He should judge or condemn them. They would stand condemned by the faithfulness of His labors. His warnings, offers and promises would testify against them—and leave them no possibility of excuse. Such words would judge them: as "*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*" "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" OBSERVE—1. The condemnation of the sinner is not arbitrary, nor does God take pleasure in it, nor is this what Christ has come for. 2. A guilty conscience needs no accuser. 3. Every mouth will be stopped at the judgment seat of Christ. 4. The very message of grace and salvation, now rejected by the sinner, will rise up in his memory to condemn him, and will show his condemnation to be just, before the universe. 5. There is a clear propriety in the final judgment—and if Christ did not come as the judge, the sinner's own memory and conscience would utter his sentence in overwhelming tones. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee."

49. See ch. 5: 30; 7: 16, 17, 28, 29; 8: 26, 28, 38. This message of Christ is not that of a mere man—nor can men escape the judgment that it necessarily brings—for it comes from God the Father Almighty, and Christ comes as His messenger and ambassador to men. Therefore, the words which He has spoken are of the highest authority, and if rejected, will carry their own condemnatory sentence with them in the soul forever. What an awful judgment must Christ's invitations pass, in the bosom of the lost sinner. How will the words, "Come unto me all ye that are weary," condemn him long as his memory endures. How will they stir up new pangs of

what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that his commandment <sup>a</sup> is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even

<sup>a</sup> 1 Jno. 3. 23.

remorse in the guilty conscience. ¶ *A commandment.* An authoritative commission. Ch. 10: 18.

50. *I know.* Our Lord here, in closing His public discourses, sets His solemn seal to His message. He declares His own testimony as to its vital importance as from the God of Heaven to lost men—the only way of salvation. ¶ *Life everlasting.* Christ's commission from the Father was the only mode of procuring and revealing everlasting life for men. And the proper knowledge and acknowledgment of the Father and Son in their work of redemption, is life everlasting. Ch. 17: 3. John repeats this doctrine in 1 John 5: 20. "This is the true God and eternal life," viz—this revelation of God by Christ Jesus—of God as reconciling the world unto Himself. Eternal life can be obtained, therefore, only by believing in Christ, accepting His finished work, and looking to Him as the way and the truth and the life. In this solemn manner our Lord brings His public preaching to a close. It was as much as to say, "I have done—I have delivered my message. It is of most vital concern to every man. It is the only plan of everlasting life for sinners. It is from the maker of Heaven and earth. I know that it is the only way of life eternal. He who rejects it, therefore, rejects everlasting life." John, in his 1st Epistle, refers to this solemn declaration when he says, "This is the record," (as though all the Scripture were summed up in this,) "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 1 John 5: 11, 13. It is in regard to this substance of Christ's testimony that he says,

as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

## CHAPTER XIII.

¶ **N**OW <sup>a</sup> before the feast of the pass-

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 26. 2, &c.

"He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." 1 John 5: 10. **OBSERVE**—Matthew, Mark and Luke have here added our Lord's taking leave of the temple, with His predictions of its destruction, and of the persecution of the disciples—the signs of His coming to destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish polity—with the parables illustrating His final coming to judgment.

This closes the **FIRST DIVISION** of John's Gospel narrative, in which he has shown the manifestation of Christ's glory in His acts, discourses and conflicts with the Jews. Now He proceeds to show His glorification in His sufferings, death and resurrection, as the **SECOND DIVISION**. In all the history it plainly appears—1. That the public work of Christ manifested His glory, and—2. That this, at the same time, led on to His death, which death again further manifested His glory. See *Introduction*.

## PART VIII.

*The Fourth Passover. Our Lord's Passion, and the accompanying events, until the end of the Jewish Sabbath.*

Time, two days.

## CHAPTER XIII.

§ 134. JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES.—*Jerusalem.*

Evening introducing the sixth day of the week.

|       |  |       |  |       |  |           |
|-------|--|-------|--|-------|--|-----------|
| Matt. |  | Mark. |  | Luke. |  | John.     |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | 13. 1-20. |

1. *Before the feast.* It is quite remarkable that John gives no account

over, when Jesus knew that his hour <sup>b</sup> was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having <sup>c</sup> loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

<sup>b</sup> c. 17. 1, 11. <sup>c</sup> Jer. 31. 3. Ep. 5. 2. 1 Jno. 4. 19. Re. 1. 5.

of this last Passover, nor of the Supper. He evidently takes for granted that they are familiar to his readers, from the other Evangelists. There are several passages in John's history which seem, at first sight, to imply that the Passover meal had not yet been partaken at the time of our Lord's crucifixion—and, hence, some have inferred that our Lord Himself did not eat this Passover. But the other Evangelists expressly state that He did—and they give no hint of its having been at any other than the regular time. As John does not undertake to give the details as the others do, we need not wonder that his account differs somewhat from the rest—while there is no real contradiction. And we may be sure that if John had given the full history, his narrative would have been more clear as to the particulars of time, &c. This question, however, was very early raised and agitated in the Church. The churches of Asia Minor in the second century differed from the Western churches on this point—the former holding that our Lord ate this Passover—the latter contending that He did not, and that the meal which He ate was in anticipation of the Passover, which was abrogated by His death—as He was the true Paschal lamb which was killed for the Passover at this time—"in the fullness of the times." Those who wish to see what can be said on this question may consult Dr. Robinson's *Harmony of the Gospels*, *Notes*—and Alford's *Commentary on the New Testament*. Matt. 26: 17. Robinson has shown conclusively that there is no contradiction in the different accounts. ¶ *Before.* The "Synopsis of the Harmony" (see Notes on Matthew,) will show that this paragraph belongs after

2 And supper being ended, (the<sup>a</sup> devil having now put into the heart

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 22. 53. c. 6. 70.

the contention among the twelve, as they sat down to the Passover meal. Verse 2 also shows that the supper was spread, and that the washing of the disciples' feet was meant to be introductory to the eating. This occurred on the evening introducing the sixth day of the week. It was Thursday evening which, after sundown, came to be reckoned as Friday morning. For the difficult question as to the day and date of this Passover of our Lord, see *ch. 19: 14, Notes*. ¶ *The feast*. This term means more properly, *festival*—and has reference to the entire solemnity of the Passover, and not to the Paschal meal. The time here meant “before the festival,” is the *festival eve*—the evening immediately preceding the festival proper. The Paschal meal was prepared on the fourteenth, (Thursday, in this case,) and eaten at evening, while the festival began on the fifteenth, and lasted seven days. ¶ *When Jesus knew*. Rather—*Jesus knowing*, or *though He knew*. By this the Evangelist expresses the contrast of His conscious dignity with this act of condescension. He was induced to this demonstration of love by the certain knowledge that He must soon leave the disciples. ¶ *His hour*. The appointed time for His death. Of this He had often before spoken, and said that it had not come. But now it had come and He knew it. ¶ *To the Father*. John here tells us distinctly, whither Christ went when He died. It was not to the spirits in prison, as some have supposed—but to the Father. So He said to the dying thief, that He was going that day to Paradise. ¶ *Loved them*. This refers to the emotion as expressed in act. He actively loved them—gave actual, visible proof of His love, as here recorded. ¶ *Unto the end*. Not to the end of the feast, merely; but to the end of life. His love could not be hindered or checked by the fear of death. He now, in immediate anticipation of it, gives them

of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,)

the tokens of His warmest love. He does not draw back when He comes to the point. So He never will forsake His people. If He did not shrink from suffering cruel tortures and death for them, will He forsake them now, that it is done? If He loved them to the end of His earthly trials and agonies on their behalf, will He not love His people to the end of their trials, and of their time on earth?

2. *Being ended*. This term rather signifies *being prepared*. The supper was spread—and it was as they were ready to eat that this service was performed. We find them still eating, vs. 12-26. ¶ *The devil*. This being is the Tempter, Satan—the Old Serpent who put disobedience into the heart of our first parents. But though he assaulted our Lord, he was not able to move Him to any sin, because he “found nothing in Him” to work upon. *Ch. 14: 30*. See *Jas. 1: 14*. ¶ *Put into the heart*. Literally, *having cast or thrust as a dart*. In *Eph. 6: 16*, his temptations are called “the fiery darts of the wicked.” We know the history of this temptation—and that it was through the *avarice* of Judas that it was accomplished. *Ch. 12: 4*. He had already bargained with the Sanhedrim to betray Him. *Matt. 26: 14*; *Mark 14*; *Luke 22*. See §131. And this term refers to past time, and probably to this bargaining. In vs. 27, the actual entrance of Satan into him marks his going forth to the deed. Here this is mentioned to show the exceeding love of Christ in the following action. ¶ *Simon's son*. Sad is it to think of the disgrace of a father by the act of such a son. Judas is here spoken of in connection with the name of his father: and possibly a careless or wicked father was in part the cause of such a career as brought his son to the horrible end of a murderer of Jesus, and a suicide. ¶ *To betray Him*. Literally, *That he should betray Him*.

3 Jesus knowing <sup>a</sup> that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that <sup>b</sup> he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself:

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 28. 18. He. 2. 8. <sup>b</sup> c. 17. 11.

3. *Jesus knowing.* This is mentioned here to show that such an act of condescension was not inconsistent with our Lord's Divinity, but perfectly in keeping with it. It was not done without a knowledge of His own majesty and glory, and it is not to be looked upon as disowning this, or denying it. Though He knew that He was Lord of the Universe, and that He was soon going to Heaven and glory, to sit down upon His throne, He stooped to wash their feet! ¶ *Given all things.* See Matt. 28: 18. This proves Christ to have been God; for no mere creature could have had the capacity for such a trust—and it plainly required Him to be God, in order to have all things in His hands.

4. *Riseth from supper.* "From the supper"—which is said in vs. 2 to have been spread. This shows that He at least was already at table, and just about to eat. ¶ *Laid aside.* Here the God-man is seen not only in the form of a servant, but in the very apparel of a servant. He put off His outer mantle, or loose robe. Ch. 19: 23. (See *Cut*, Matt. 5: 42.) It was the custom to lay this aside when they were going to work; as it was in the way, and hindered a free use of the limbs. ¶ *A towel.* The dress of the East requires a girdle, and the people usually wear a sash of silk or cotton around the waist. But to be girded with a towel was the dress of a slave. See Luke 17: 8. Tholuck understands that our Lord had already reclined at the table—that, as they had no servants, the feet-washing would naturally have been done by one of the disciples. The things necessary for it were at hand. As the disciples are debating who shall undertake it, Jesus

5 After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter <sup>1</sup> said unto

<sup>1</sup> He.

no longer remains in His reclining posture, but rises Himself to perform this duty of a servant, to show His condescending love in this closing transaction. How symbolical was this of that love which led Him to lay aside the garb of Godhead and take our servile flesh. Phil. 2: 5-7. Claudius has said that "such an ideal of man as presents itself here never entered the heart of man. Whatever greatness and glory antiquity presented—a dying Epaninondas—a dying Socrates—vanishes before this specimen of Deity in humiliation, and of a Divine form of a servant."

5. *Basin.* Such a vessel was usually at hand for this purpose. It was the custom, at feasts, to have a servant wash the feet of guests. 1 Sam. 25: 41. This was necessary, as they traveled in the dust of a hot country, and wore sandals which exposed the feet.

¶ *Feet.* As they reclined according to the Persian habit, since the captivity, the feet were stretched out upon the couch, so that this could easily be done. ¶ *To wipe them.* This was also the servant's work, and the towel was used for this purpose. (See *Cut*, ch. 2.)

6. *Then.* That is, in the course of His washing their feet—as He went around from one to another He came to Peter. This implies rather that He did not go to Peter first, as some understand. This presents Peter's conduct in a more striking light. ¶ *Dost Thou.* Rather—*art thou washing*, (about to wash) my feet? "He thinks the act unworthy of the Lord—even as many think that great act of love to have been, which was typified by it." Many make the extreme condescension of Christ to sinners, a difficulty in the way of their understanding or accept

him, Lord, dost <sup>a</sup> thou wash my feet!

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3. 14.

ing the salvation. They cannot see how this can be.

7. *What I do.* The terms *I* and *thou* here are emphatic, as well as *now* and *hereafter*, and are placed in contrast. They did not understand yet as they afterwards would, what He meant by this. It was a symbol of spiritual washing and purification. It was a lesson also to them of brotherly love and personal humility. And it was only one way of expressing the work that He was carrying on—laying aside His glory, taking the form of a servant, and cleansing His disciples by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord gave some hints of the meaning in its immediate connection with themselves. vss. 13, 14. ¶ *Shalt know.* This was a precious promise, which ought to satisfy in all cases. It applies also to all events. They should constantly know more and more of the condescension of Christ, as they should further understand His dying Love. They should see the need of personal humility and brotherly kindness, and the claim upon them to this from the humiliation of Christ for them. These things they would better understand at His death. And the cleansing work of the Spirit, as purchased for them by Christ, they would understand at Pentecost and afterwards. OBSERVE. — 1. Christ's acts of Love to us are often misunderstood. 2. His dark dealings are to be explained hereafter. 3. We are promised by Him that we shall know the course of His dealing toward us, if not in this world, in the next. And hence, instead of demanding to see and know everything now, we should submit. 4. It is the part of faith to trust where we do not know, and to be satisfied where we do not see—relying upon

shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If <sup>b</sup> I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my hands, and my head.*

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 6. 11. Ep. 5. 26. Tit. 3. 5.

God's faithfulness. To believe only so far as we can see, is walking by *sight* and not by *faith*. "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee." Where we cannot see, is the very place for trust. To trust Christ only so far as we can see Him, is no trust.

8. *Thou shalt never, &c.* The terms here are very strong. *Thou shalt not by any means, ever.* This is the temper of the rash, self-willed Peter. ¶ *Wash thee not.* "Our Lord replies rather to the spirit of Peter's objection, than to his words." The same temper of declining Christ's plan of grace, even on account of its condescension, would keep him from receiving salvation itself or the spiritual cleansing which is here signified. It seems to many, a mark of true humility to refuse such condescending terms and ways as Christ offers to sinners in the Gospel. But when it is *sought into* we often find it is a lurking pride of heart, that will not yield to so unheard of a method, and will not accept such gratuitous, free-service, as is without money and without price. ¶ *Thou hast no part, &c.* The meaning is, that if he would not allow this, He would not allow the spiritual work which it signified—and though this washing of the feet in itself, was a small matter, yet if Christ was not to be allowed to do His cleansing work for him, he could not be His—could not partake of His benefits and blessings. At any rate, disobedience to Christ would be fatal.

9. See 1 John 1: 3-7. Peter seeing that his submission to Christ's work and way was a condition of his salvation, and getting a hint perhaps of what was meant by our Lord, changed his tone, and begged to be washed abundantly. Now He could not have



10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For <sup>a</sup> he knew who should betray him: therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments,

c. 6. 61.

enough of the cleansing which was so connected with an interest in Christ. He could not consent to be cast off from Christ. "Let me be entirely washed by thee that I may have full participation with thee." Chrysostom says: "In his deprecation, Peter was vehement—in his yielding, more vehement; but both came from his love."

10. Our Lord now proceeds to show the deep spiritual meaning of this action, and how it is that the feet need to be washed by Him, even though the soul has been renewed, and how it is that no more is necessary. It is just as when one has been bathed, but afterwards needs to have his feet washed from the dust or sand that will cleave to them along the way. One who has been regenerated, needs, yet, a daily cleansing of the feet from the defilements of the way—from the corruptions of his daily walk in this world. 2 Cor. 7: 1; Jas. 1: 21; Acts 15: 8, 9; 2 Pet. 2: 22. ¶ *Every whit.* Entirely—*wholly* clean. See Eph. 5: 26. He does not mean that they were any of them perfect, but that they did not need another regeneration, (an entire washing as Peter called for,) but only this cleansing from the way. Such as had been renewed by the washing of regeneration, were clean entirely, through His word abiding in them, (ch. 15: 3,) and only needed this habitual sanctification. ¶ *But not all.* This exception refers to Judas.

11. *For He knew.* Our Lord was not ignorant, as John testifies, in regard to what was to come upon Him, and the Evangelists afterwards understood this reference. ¶ *Who should betray*

and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye <sup>b</sup> call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

b Matt. 23. 8-10. Ph. 2. 11.

*Him. Gr.—The betrayer—the one betraying Him—that is, who was about betraying Him.* This is the reason why our Lord made the exception. John did not understand it at the time, for he asked at the Supper, who it was. vs. 35. But as he wrote this gospel history some fifty or sixty years after the event, he testifies here as to the meaning which was made so clear by the events.

12. "As Peter was not *the first* that He washed, (vs. 6,) so he was not *the last*. Judging from what follows, John was more probably the first, then Peter, then the rest."—*Alford.* ¶ *Know ye.* This He says to call their attention to the explanation He would now give. This was the kind, patient manner in which our Lord would urge His instructions upon them, and secure their being understood. "Do ye know the *meaning* of what I have done to you, and its *design*?"

13. *Master. Literally, Teacher.* ¶ *Lord.* The Greek shows that these were titles which they gave to Christ. "*Lord*" is a term by which the Greek translators of the Old Testament have rendered the name Jehovah. It is constantly applied to Christ in the New Testament. It means, properly, *Proprietor, Ruler.* These titles He claimed and deserved.

14. The lesson He meant to give by that action was this—That if He, their Head, Teacher and Proprietor, had condescended to do to them this work of a servant, they, surely, should be willing to serve one another in such an humble manner, by such acts of condescending kindness. This action of

15 For <sup>a</sup> I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord: neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

a 1 Pe. 2. 21.

our Lord, notwithstanding this explanation, has been misunderstood and applied to a mere ceremonial religion. Since the fourth century, the washing has been practiced literally upon those newly baptized, as though it were meant as a mere outward ordinance. (Bingham, Ant. Eccl. iv., p. 394.) The Pope, at Easter, is accustomed to wash the feet of *twelve beggars*! But this is surely a human institution; for if *literally* to be done, it is nowhere limited to *twelve*, nor to *beggars*, but is to be universally done. Bengel says, "The Pope would do a more remarkable thing, if in unfeigned humility he washed the feet of one king, than he does in washing the feet of twelve poor men." It was neither called for nor fit, except where sandals were used; and there it could be practiced as a work of love, (1 Tim. 5: 10,) like any other loving service. It is plain, therefore, from the very nature of the command, that it was not meant to require every Christian to wash the feet of every fellow Christian, but to do what is signified by this, in various condescending acts of Christian kindness. Even the Moravians have the outward form practiced in their church: but optionally, and not as a fixed obligation. It was not observed by the Apostles and early Christians as an outward ceremony. Our Lord, in this impressive way, meant to warn them against ambition. But with what poor grace does the outward washing of a few of his beggars' feet come from the Pope, who beggars so many by his ambitious tyranny!

15. *Should do as.* Not that ye should do the *same thing*—but *similarly*. It is not the act, but the spirit, that is to be practiced. It is to be imitated by en-

17 If <sup>b</sup> ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

18 I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but that the <sup>c</sup> scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.

b Ja. 1. 25.

c Ps. 41. 9.

deavoring, "if a man be overtaken in a fault, to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness."—(Gal. 6: 1-16;) "*forgiving one another if a man have a quarrel against any*"—and by *bearing one another's burdens*—and by doing acts that might be regarded as servile, yet mutually self-denying for Christ's sake—assisting each other by all means in temporal and spiritual progress, and esteeming other better than self. Of ceremonies that have become empty, Claudius says—"They are little flags which reach forth over the water, and mark where a ship with her rich lading has sunk."

16. This proverbial expression is applied here in a sense that agrees with the tenor of the discourse. "If the Master thus humbles Himself, much more should His servants and messengers." Matt. 10: 24; Luke 6: 40.

17. See Luke 12: 48. ¶ *If ye know.* "As I have given you the teaching, and explained it to you, blessed are ye if ye put it in practice." It is much easier to know than to obey. After all my acts and explanations of this duty, it is nothing for your good, unless you observe it. OBSERVE—1. It is a source of true happiness to show a disinterested, self-sacrificing love. For even Christ "pleased not Himself." 2. From our Lord's washing the feet of Judas with the rest, though He knew what was in his heart, we are taught the duty of treating professed Christians as sincere, until they prove themselves otherwise.

18. *I speak not.* In thus addressing them as to Christian character and privilege—as clean, &c., He must be understood again, as excepting *one* among them, though He did not give

19 Now <sup>1</sup> I tell <sup>a</sup> you before it come, that when it is come to

<sup>1</sup> or, from henceforth. a c. 14. 29; 16. 4.

the name. So He had hinted, vs. 10. ¶ *Have chosen.* The term is used once as including Judas, and refers to the choosing out from His disciples of the twelve for the apostleship: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Ch. 6: 70. But here it evidently refers to His eternal and gracious election, by which He "hath chosen His people to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2: 13. This betrayal that He referred to, therefore, would not come upon Him unawares. He knew who were His, in distinction from such as were not. He knew, as others, and even the fellow disciples, did not know. The Good Shepherd *knows His sheep.* "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His." 2 Tim. 2: 19. See ch. 15: 16. OBSERVE—Every Christian may ask Himself, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" and what keeps any of us from being such as Judas, but the sovereign and free-electing love of God in Christ, who "hath ordained us that our fruit should remain." Ch. 15. ¶ *But that,* &c. Our Lord would say, That Judas' treachery had not come upon Him unforeseen, nor contrary to His certain knowledge. The Scriptures had all along looked forward to such a result, and the event would be only a higher fulfillment of the passage in Ps. 41: 9, which if perhaps it immediately referred to Ahithopel or Mephibosheth, and to his conduct towards David, nevertheless looked forward to the traitorous act of Judas toward the New Testament *David.* It seems, however, that the passage is a more direct prediction of Judas' betrayal. The person speaking is not David, but *the righteous sufferer*, who is to be understood as eminently the Messiah. He is here characterized as the *poor man*, and Christ had not where to lay His head. See also vs. 5 of the Psalm. So far, therefore, from our Lord's be-

pass, ye may believe that I am *he.*

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you,

ing disappointed in Judas, He knew that he was not one of His chosen—but was the son of perdition; and the act, though so infamous, was one of the transactions contemplated by the whole plan of grace—foreseen and provided for. ¶ *He that eateth,* &c. This was regarded as an act of friendship. Gen. 43: 22; 2 Sam. 9: 11. The meaning is, that Judas had been on the most intimate terms with Christ—had been his disciple, constantly attending upon Him, sharing His lot—admitted to personal friendship as "*one of the twelve.*" This was the amazing iniquity, that "Judas, one of the twelve," (Matt. 26: 14,) should betray his Lord. OBSERVE—The allusion to Judas becomes more distinct, until he is pointed out at the table as the betrayer. ¶ *Bread.* In the Psalm the Hebrew reads "*my bread.*" ¶ *Lifted up,* &c. Bengel thinks that this alludes to the washing of the feet, and to the mode of lying stretched out at table. Christ had just now washed the feet of Judas, and he was ready to lift up his heel against Him.

19. *Now.* This verse throws light upon the object of our Lord's previous remarks. They would naturally be alarmed by the treachery of Judas, when so soon it should be revealed. They might think that He had been overwhelmed by His enemies and deceived by a pretended friend, and had sunk powerless under His betrayer, He would provide them with this forewarning, and fortify their minds against the shock, that when it should come to pass they might not disbelieve Him, nor be offended in Him, (ch. 16: 1,) but might rather take this additional proof of His being God. Ch. 13: 19. It marked Him out as a true prophet—as the injured Person to whom the prediction refers—and as God the searcher of hearts, whom no hypocrisy could escape.

20. The connexion of this verse with the foregoing, seems to be this.

\* He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

¶ 21 When <sup>b</sup> Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

*a* Matt. 10: 40. *b* Matt. 1: 6. 21. Mar. 14: 18. Lu. 24: 21.

Though Judas was to fall from the high office of the Apostleship, his falling away was not to desecrate the office. They were not to be ashamed of their office on this account. They were to be received on the higher principle of regard for Him, in His name, for His sake, and not for any mere personal superiority—for all of them would fall like Judas, but for His electing and restraining grace. ¶ *Receiveth me.* See Notes, Matthew 10: 40. He who receiveth my messengers, receiveth me, in so doing. And so, also, receiving me, he receives Him who sent me. And in this way, their office as ambassadors for God, was one of such solemnity, and the fruits of their mission were to be so extensive. As the treatment rendered to one of His ministers was to be regarded as shown to Him and to the Father, they might go forth humble and ready to wash each other's feet, yet confident in their office and work, and not disheartened by the fall of one of their number. These words were spoken for their encouragement beforehand, showing the grounds on which they had to go and claim a reception among men, viz.—that they were ambassadors for Christ. 2 Cor. 5: 20. This would strengthen them to hear what He was now to declare. OBSERVE—It would be unjust to disparage the office of the ministry, because some who have held it have been guilty of gross crimes. It is still “the ministry of reconciliation.”

§ 135. JESUS POINTS OUT THE TRAITOR. JUDAS WITHDRAWS.—*Jerusalem.*

Matt. 26: 21-25. Mark. 14: 18-21. Luke. 22: 21-23. John. 13: 21-35.

21. Our Lord now proceeds to show

that one of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one<sup>c</sup> of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

*c* c. 20: 2; 21: 7, '0.

His perfect foreknowledge of all that was to come upon Him. It seems amazing that such a direct exposure of Judas, and of his dark plot, did not break it up. But He who knew the end from the beginning, declared most positively that it should take place, and that nothing would hinder it. ¶ *Was troubled.* This awful *troubling of spirit* occurred on several distinct occasions, and was so serious as to be recorded by the Holy Ghost. Ch. 11: 33; 12: 27. The term means, to be *agitated*—as water in a pool. There was, perhaps, a deep sense of that dreadful depravity of human nature which Judas's treachery only acted out, and which was made to meet upon our Lord (Isa. 53: 6,) as Himself standing in the sinner's place. He speaks the words of affectionate sorrow, not of anger. ¶ *Testified.* Solemnly *bore witness* and *announced*. This is the first time He had so plainly made the declaration. ¶ *One of you.* This was so far a relief to them, that it confined the infamous transaction to one of their number; whereas, before this, He had spoken indefinitely.

22. *Looked one on, &c.* This describes their agitation and surprise, wondering at the word of our Lord, and naturally enough, gazing at each other—each to see how it struck the rest—and whether any of them could explain it—or who of them could be the guilty one. ¶ *Doubting.* The term means, being *at a loss*. OBSERVE—Their sweet charity.

23. Since the captivity, the Jews lay at table in the Persian manner, on divans or couches, each on his left side, with his face toward the table, his left elbow resting on a pillow and support-

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then, lying on Jesus'

ing his head. Thus the second guest to the right hand, lay with his head near the breast of the first, and so on. *See Cut, Notes, ch. 2.* The one at the right hand of Him who sat at the head of the table, reclined toward His breast, and was said to "lean on His bosom." It is conjectured that "as John was on Christ's right hand, Judas was on His left hand"—and that so there was exhibited at the Paschal supper what was afterwards seen on the cross—Jesus between two, who bore in a manner the image of those who shall stand at His right and His left hand, in the last judgment—"the beloved disciple," and "the son of perdition." ¶ *Whom Jesus loved.* Here John first uses this phrase. This delicate way in which John speaks of himself, covers nothing like a proud boast, but rather a most humble acknowledgment. He boasts indeed of *being loved* by Christ, and not as Peter, of showing his love. It is the expression of modest, earnest gratitude. John's name was expressive of the same idea. It means the *favor or grace of God*. The Evangelists show that they do not seek notoriety for themselves. Much more desirable is it to be loved by Jesus, than to be called by any name, or to have that name celebrated on earth.

24. He occupied such a position as to have the best opportunity of asking our Lord—and as specially beloved by the Master, his relations were such as to allow of his asking Him who would soon entrust His own mother to his charge.

25. *Lying on Jesus' breast.* These terms are quite different from the former, in vs. 23. They mean rather—"falling upon the breast of Jesus"—leaning his head actually upon His breast, to ask the question. Matthew and Mark describe the twelve as in-

breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a <sup>1</sup> sop, when I have dipped it. And when he

<sup>1</sup> or, morsel.

quitting among themselves, "Is it I?" and Judas himself, as repeating the question—but last of all. *See Notes.* Therefore, this that passed between Peter and John and our Lord may have been unnoticed by the rest.

26. *Answered.* He seems to have made a general reply to the general questioning of the disciples as well as this more express reply to the particular inquiry of John. Mark says, "He answered and said to *them*," it is "one of the twelve that dippeh his hand with me in the dish"—one sitting in closest company so as to be eating from the same dish. *See Cut, ch. 2.* ¶ *A sop.* This word means a morsel of food. After the second cup of wine, at the Paschal meal, the master of the feast took a piece of unleavened bread, brake it in pieces and gave a bit to each one of those present. It was commonly dipped in the broth, made of bitter herbs. This was now done in a way to point out Judas—either given to him alone at that moment, or given to him differently from the rest—*after dipping it.* "This giving the sop was one of the closest testimonies of friendly affection." It is doubtful whether any of the twelve, except Peter and John, understood this signal—perhaps only the latter, as the act was proper to the occasion. And what was said in reply to John's question, may have been spoken in an undertone, and only for the inquirer. *See vs. 28, 29.* OBSERVE—He whose feet Jesus had washed in full knowledge of all that was to take place, shall have nothing but kindness from the Saviour throughout. OBSERVE—Jesus gives a portion in this life to His enemies. Often it serves to reveal their wickedness—and how often is it soaked with bitterness. ¶ *Judas.* Here the full name of the traitor is given. In so dreadful a con-

he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*.

27 And after the sop, Satan<sup>a</sup> entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

a Lu. 22. 3.

nexion it is proper that he be designated as plainly and fully by the Evangelist as he was by our Lord.

27. *Satan entered.* It was before said that Satan put it in his heart to betray Jesus. Now, as a further step in the Satanic impulse, the devil is said to have entered into him—taken full possession. He “filled the heart” of Ananias and Sapphira to lie. Acts 5. But this is more. He *entered in* with his whole train of malignant spirits, so that he was under the full power of Satan—given up to the devil—to do the fiendish work at once. ¶ *Do quickly.* Hitherto Christ had given him warnings and opportunities to repent of his evil purpose. Now he gives him up at last and says, *go on then*, and do what you are so intent on doing. Go on if you will, and that without further delaying at my table, and among my disciples. Go to your own friends, to your own work, and to *your own place!* This is the most dreadful sentence of God—in which he abandons the sinner to the power of Satan, and bids him *go on* and work out his own perdition with no salvation for him. When our Lord said, *do quickly* what you are, to my certain knowledge, about to do, He may have meant to rebuke his hypocritical pretence of ignorance when he said, “Is it I.” Matt. 26: 25.

28. *No man.* This shows how far the thought was from the breast of any of the rest. Probably John excepts himself in this remark—though some think that he means to include himself as not knowing what Christ meant by these words, not supposing that the deed was so soon to be done.

29 For some of them thought,<sup>b</sup> because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

b c. 12. 6.

29. *Against the feast.* Rather—the *festival*—including the whole duration of the festival, and not referring to the Paschal meal. As it was now on the evening of Thursday, introducing the sixth day of the week, Friday, it was growing late, and haste was necessary to make purchases for the Friday, and following days. Our Lord had not, on this occasion, commanded all the necessary preparations to be made before the festival. They, therefore, naturally enough supposed that this was what was directed by the Master. See Exodus 12: 16. ¶ *To the poor.* Our Lord it would seem, had been accustomed to give him such orders. It might have been thought to refer to some help for the poor in making provisions for the peace-offerings and thanks-offerings made in the temple during the festival. Num. 10; Deut. 12: 17; 14: 26.

30. *Having received.* Judas had watched the questioning of John about the betrayer, and all the looks and movements of our Lord pointing him out, and now, at this direct reference to him, though it was only in itself a common token of friendship, his conscience doubtless stung him most keenly. The Master against whom he was plotting, was following him up with kindness, which now heaped coals of fire on his guilty head. ¶ *Went immediately out.* Luke mentions that the cup of the Lord's supper was given after the Paschal meal. Luke 22: 20. Hence we infer that Judas went out before the institution of the Lord's Supper. Perhaps our Lord pressed upon Judas to withdraw, (vs. 27,) in order that he might

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now <sup>a</sup> is the Son of man glorified, and God <sup>b</sup> is glorified in him.

32 If God be glorified in him,

a c. 12. 23; 17. 1-6. b c. 14. 13. 1 Pe. 4. 11.

have no part in the holy ordinance. ¶ *Night.* The Evangelist means by this to show that it was yet the same night, introducing Friday, the day of our Lord's death. The night had already set in, when the traitor hurried out in the darkness to do his darkest deed. It must also have been before midnight, as the Paschal supper could not continue beyond that time.

31. Here the language plainly intimates that Judas' withdrawal gave our Lord an opportunity, which He much desired, to open to His own true and faithful followers the burden of His soul. At first, He spake familiarly and answered their anxious questions, while yet at the table—then rising from the Supper, He discoursed in a higher strain. Ch. 14: 31. Then follows His parting prayer. Ch. 17. Krummacher calls this portion of our Lord's history "THE MOST HOLY PLACE." ¶ *Glorified.* This step of Judas He saw as leading directly to the great and glorious consummation. It was to result in His death. But He looked beyond that to His resurrection and to His ascension, which would be His glorification with the Father. Bengel says: "Jesus here regards His suffering as a short journey, and loves to look at the goal." "*The Son of Man,*" is a title which our Lord takes to Himself as peculiar to Him. The prophet Ezekiel was called "Son of Man," as being a man in this high prophetic office; but Jesus is by eminence "*the Son of Man.*" The phrase is found *sixty-six* times in the gospel narratives, and in every instance is used by our Lord of Himself. According to the Hebrew idiom, the *son* of any thing is one who has that quality or nature in a special degree. Jesus is man in the highest sense, as is seen in the 8th Psalm. He is the perfect man—the second

God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall

Adam, as Head of His redeemed people. Heb. 2: 16. He is the appointed "Son of Man" whom God made strong for Himself, (Psalm 80: 17,) and He is the God-MAN. ¶ *God is glorified.* Looking upon Himself as being thus about to close His labors on earth, He sees the Father glorified in His having finished the work which He gave Him to do. ch. 17: 4. See also ch. 12: 28. "*God is glorified*" He says, as though it were already accomplished—so certain is the end, and so near. God would be glorified in His power, wisdom, justice, faithfulness and love. See *Brown's Discourses.*

32. *If.* Rather—*As surely as* "God is, and is to be, glorified in Him," that is, in His mediatorial work—in His sacrifice and obedience, as completed by His death—the Father "shall also glorify Him"—that is, by His miraculous testimony to Him as the Son of God—in the signs that should accompany His death—in the powerful declaration of His Sonship by the resurrection from the dead, (Rom. 1: 4,) and also in the exaltation of Him to Glory. He had a glory with the Father, in the Godhead, before the foundation of the world, (Ch. 17: 5;) but this special glory was to be as "*the Son of Man,*" with His risen manhood. ¶ *In Himself.* See ch. 12: 28; 17: 5. In the Father—as His perfections all shine forth in the Son, and as in the redeeming work of Christ, so gloriously finished, the perfections of the Father have their highest lustre; His wisdom, holiness and grace are glorified. Thus Christ's glory is the glory of the Father, and the Father's glorifying Christ, glorifies Himself, so entirely are they one. ¶ *Straightway.* This leads to the remark in the next verse.

33. *Little children.* The Evangelist uses this term elsewhere, (see Epistles

seek me: and,<sup>a</sup> as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come: so now I say to you.

34 A new<sup>b</sup> commandment I give unto you, That ye love one

<sup>a</sup> c. 7: 34; 8: 21. <sup>b</sup> 1 Le. 19: 18. c. 15: 12, 17. Ep. 5: 2; 1 Th. 4: 9. Ja. 2: 8. 1 Pe. 1: 22. 1 Jno. 2: 7, 8; 3: 11, 23; 4: 20, 21.

of John,) but Christ only here. It expresses their tender relation to Him as sons, (1 John 3: 1,) growing out of His glorious Sonship. It implies that they are heirs, also, (Rom. 8: 17;) and it denotes their weakness as *babes*, yet not to be left orphans. Ch. 14: 18. ¶ *A little while.* The glorification of which He spake was just at hand. He should continue with them only a little while yet, as He knew His death to be hastening. ¶ *Cannot come.* He had so said to the Jews, but in a different sense. Ch. 7: 37; 8: 21. He said it now to them in a sense which He explains, vs. 36. He should disappear from them, and go to heaven. They should seek Him, but could not follow Him, as they had done when passing from place to place on earth.

34. This is introduced here to show the way by which alone they shall follow Him to Heaven—by love to Him and to one another. ¶ *A new commandment.* Love to God and man was the substance of the Old Testament commandments. But it was “to love thy neighbor as thyself.” Now it is, “to love one another as I have loved you.” The love of Christ to us is made the motive and measure of our love to one another. This is a higher rule of love than any other. This is a new rule. This Christ calls “my commandment,” 15: 12. Paul calls it “the law of Christ.” Gal. 6: 2. James calls it the “royal law,” 2: 8; and Christ again calls it “the first and great commandment.” It was to be also a peculiar love—a Christian love—a love to one another as Christians, as *fellow-heirs*, as redeemed together. This was to surmount all other distinctions. This love was given to them to be a badge of their discipleship. Like Christ we are to say, “He that doeth

another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother.” It was to make the Christian brotherhood most peculiarly *one*. Ch. 17: 22, 23. It was to lead to mutual aid—brotherly self-denials. Hence, “leaving one another’s burdens” was considered as fulfilling “the law of Christ.” Gal. 6: 2. It was a *new* commandment in its connections with His love to them, as now about to be displayed in its strongest light. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” and so “we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.” 1 John 3: 16. This commandment is new, therefore, in the character of the love that is required.

35. This mutual love should unite them in one faithful brotherhood, and should everywhere distinguish them from the world beside. The early Christians regarded this as their glory. 1 John 3: 23; 1 Thess. 4: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 22; 2 Thess. 1: 3; 2 Pet. 1: 7. The heathen often exclaimed in amazement, “See how these Christians love one another, and how ready they are to die for one another.”—*Tertull. Apol.* c. 39. They “had all things common,” “as every one had need.” Acts 2: 44. And in the first centuries, their liberal contributions to the poor saints and to the church, showed their love. Acts 11: 29. *Lucian*, a heathen writer of apostolic times, said contemptuously of the Christians, “Their Lawgiver has persuaded them all to be brethren.” By this, also, they were themselves to know that they were His disciples. 1 John 3: 14. John, in his First Epistle, (3: 16,) thus expresses it—“Hereby perceive we the Love, (it is not said *whose*, since there is but one instance of such love,) because He laid down His life for us—



¶ 36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but <sup>a</sup> thou shalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will <sup>b</sup> lay down my life for thy sake.

<sup>a</sup> c. 21: 18. <sup>2</sup> Pe. 1: 14. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 26: 33, &c. Mar. 14: 29, &c. Lu. 22: 33, &c.

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." See 1 John 4: 21; 3: 23; 2: 8. Brotherly love in such form had never been seen in the world.

§ 136. JESUS FORETELLS THE FALL OF PETER AND THE DISPERSION OF THE TWELVE.—*Jerusalem.*

Matt. 26: 31-35 | Mark. 14: 27-31 | Luke. 22: 31-38 | John. 13: 36-38

33. Peter seems to have understood Him by vs. 33 that He would fall into violent hands—be seized and carried away—else why could he not follow Him? And even in such case why not? ¶ *Shalt follow.* This leads to the ample explanation in the opening of the next chapter. There was room in His Father's house for more than Himself. He should follow Christ by a similar death. Ch. 21: 18, 19.

37. *Why?* It is natural to ask the explanation of God's rules—especially where He lays any restriction upon us. But often we find, as Peter did, that He knows us better than we know ourselves. ¶ *My life.* This was the impulsive Peter—who was also so warm and earnest, and yet so cowardly, as it proved—"a stone," and yet "a stumbling-stone." This was no hypocritical profession. He felt it all, but he did not know himself. His denials, thrice repeated in a few hours from that time, helped to show him his own heart. The risen Saviour refers to this bold profession, (ch. 21: 15.) and we find this great apostle, after he was recovered from the fall that so followed upon his self-confidence, declining to say any more than "Lord, thou knowest all things--thou knowest that I love

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

## CHAPTER XIV.

¶ LET <sup>c</sup> not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe <sup>d</sup> also in me.

<sup>c</sup> Is. 43: 1, 2. ver. 17. <sup>2</sup> Th. 2: 2. <sup>d</sup> Is. 12: 2, 3. Ep. 1: 12, 13. 1 Pe. 1: 11.

*thee.*" Matthew and Mark are more full, and have it, "Though all men shall be offended in thee, yet will I never be offended." See Notes. ¶ *Shall not crow.* See Notes on Luke 22: 34.

## CHAPTER XIV.

§ 138. JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES—THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED.—*Jerusalem.*

Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John. |  
14: 1-31.

In these wonderful Discourses, says Tholuck, (chap. 14-16,) there is a *childlike* tone, and a certain subdued style of delineation, not possible to have been invented by man. No where throughout the entire Gospel, has the language of Christ such perfect artlessness—a character so adapted to the minds of His disciples as here. As Luther says, "He speaks as one must who would charm and win the simple."

1. *Be troubled.* This term was used in the last chapter, vs. 21, respecting Christ as being "*troubled* in spirit." Now He who has felt such troubling of soul, pities His troubled disciples. The term expresses strong agitation, as water agitated by tempest. No wonder they are troubled at the thought of their Master's death—of Peter's denial, and of Judas' treachery, all of which had just been foretold with deep emotion. ¶ *Ye believe.* This term may be rendered in the imperative—"Believe." It is in the same form in both clauses, and it would very properly read, "Believe in God, believe also in me." But the common reading is to be preferred. It makes

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I

would have told you. I go <sup>a</sup> to prepare a place for you.

a He. 6. 20; 9. 8, 24. Re. 21. 2.

the *also* more emphatic, and agrees best with the drift of His discourse. He assumes their belief in God, of which, as Jews, they always boasted—speaks encouragingly of this as the ground of their belief in Him—for He came forth from God, and produced ample testimonies from the Father. This was just the point of difficulty, that they did not fully believe in His oneness with the God of Abraham—and this was the point at which He labored with them till the last: as in the case of Thomas, &c. Hence He says “MY FATHER’S HOUSE.” This command is closely connected with all that He had just said in ch. 13: 31, 32. They ought fully to believe in the glorious results of His work, as ensuring the glory of the Father and the Son, and as providing for their future glory, so that they should follow Him afterwards. They were not taking high views of His work—and especially they were not trusting fully in the plan of grace for their own salvation. Now He addresses them amidst all their fears with the sweet words of consolation—as though He had said, Do not be disheartened at all these gloomy forebodings: only trust in the Father and in Me, as united so entirely in the work of redemption—and as so tenderly providing for your personal case.

2. *House*. They are now encouraged to confide in Him as one with the Father—for He shows them that *His Father’s house* is the place to which He is going, and to which He conducts them: that there is ample *room* there for many. Some understand this house to mean the universe, and that He would here assure them of His only going to another part of the same Father’s house. But this would be comparatively a poor consolation—that death would not remove Him entirely away from them, but only to a different apartment. His Father’s house is here expressly spoken of as the place to

which He was going to prepare for them an abode, so that *they could be together*, and it refers to the Upper Temple—Heaven—“Paradise,” where God dwells, and whither He was going soon in His glorified body—*taking the thief with Him*. Luke 23: 43. OBSERVE—

This is properly in reply to Peter’s question. Ch. 13: 36. What, then, could hinder their following Him soon?

¶ *Mansions*. Literally, *abiding places*. He meant to say to them, There is room enough for you all. Luke 14: 22. This is your personal interest in the matter. Why then be discouraged? What more consolatory than that you shall follow me, and that every provision will be made by me.—They should have “*abundant entrance*.” 2 Pet. 1: 11.

¶ *If it were not so*. Literally, *if not*.

All along He had encouraged them to expect ample benefits from His work; and if there were not these provisions for them in His Father’s house, and if they could not follow He would have told them so. He would not have encouraged such expectations if they were not to be fulfilled. ¶ *I go—I am going*. He now sets forth His part in the matter, and shows what His departure has to do with it. They ought to trust in Him, that He will make good all His promises. The very object of His going was this—to prepare—to make ready a place for them, where they should sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Luke 13: 28, 29. He does not even go back to His Father’s house solely on His own account. He was to ascend, not simply as having finished His work on earth, but also to carry it on in Heaven. Our High Priest was to present the blood in the holiest of all, and there to make intercession for us. Heb. 9: 12. He was to enter there before us as our *Forerunner*, to wait for us—and to stand as the warrant for us till we should come. Heb. 4: 14–16; 7: 25–27; 10: 12; 13: 19–22. He was the true Joshua—the Leader into the Rest

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will <sup>a</sup> come again, and receive you unto myself; that <sup>b</sup> where I am, *there* ye may be also.

<sup>a</sup> He. 9. 28. <sup>c</sup> c. 12. 26; 17. 24. <sup>1</sup> Th. 4. 17.

of God. Heb. 4: 8, 9. He opened the way, through death to Heaven for all believers.

3. *And if, &c.* There is no doubt expressed in these terms. It means "*when I shall have gone,*" &c., or, *as surely as I go.* It was not merely necessary to prepare the place, but to come and lead them to it. ¶ *I will come.* Rather—"*I am coming again, and will take you,*" &c. He is *coming again* at the second Advent to the final judgment. His going to prepare a place, implied His return to take them thither for its occupancy. But, meanwhile, there would be divers "comings" of His which should more and more point to that, and give assurance of it as foreshadows of the great final event. This coming is begun at His resurrection—carried on in the spiritual work, (vs. 23,) by which they should be made ready for the place prepared—it is further advanced, when each believer is taken away, to be with Him, (Phil. 1: 23,)—when the Son of man comes to each in death, (2 Cor. 5: 6-9; 1 Thess. 5: 10,)—and it is fully completed at His coming in glory—when they shall be ever with the Lord. 1 Thess. 4: 17. ¶ *That where I am.* That *where I belong*—where my abode is—my Father's house, there ye may be also. In ch. 17: 24, He prays in His parting petition, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;" and He states the reason for this—that *they may behold my glory.*

4. *Ye know.* He means to say that now He had answered their question in ch. 13: 35, both as to whither He was going, and the way for their going thither. He had plainly stated it in the foregoing words. He was going to His Father's house. There was room enough there for them all. He

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

was going with the express object of arranging everything for their arrival. And He assured them of His coming again to take them to Himself, that they might be there also. If they were not utterly blinded they must see what he had made so plain.

5. *Thomas.* This is the loving, but doubting Thomas—who was ready to say, "Let us also go that we may die with Him," when the Master would go up to Bethany. Ch. 11: 16. He would not believe in the resurrection without seeing the print of the nails. Ch. 20: 25. Yet that was, evidently, because the news seemed to *him too good to be true.* So here it is the language of deep interest and of jealous love. It was the language of affection, too deep to be indifferent to such a matter, and only too inclined to look on the dark side. This would forbid encouraging views, and keep up perpetual disquiet. How many such are there in the church—habitual doubters, yet not unbelievers—having not enough assurance about their own gracious estate to give them animation in Christian duty. We shall find that it is just this flagging spirit that keeps Thomas from the prayer meeting. Ch. 20: 24. So here he does not *know* anything certainly or clearly about the matter, after all that the Master had said. He was full of other notions and expectations which served to keep him in the dark about the true nature of Christ's kingdom. Their fancy ran, says Henry, on His going to Bethlehem or Nazareth or Capernaum or elsewhere, to be anointed King. The idea yet lurked in the minds of some of them, that He would thus restore the kingdom to Israel. When He arose, they were ready to look for that event as likely to take place then, or soon. Acts 1: 6. And with such views, so

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth,<sup>b</sup> and the life;

“no<sup>a</sup> man cometh unto the Father but by me.

<sup>a</sup> Is. 35. 8, 9. <sup>c</sup> 10. 9. <sup>He</sup> 10. 19, 20. <sup>b</sup> c. 1. 17; 15. 1.

<sup>c</sup> c. 1. 4; 11. 25. <sup>d</sup> Ac. 4. 12.

persistently entertained, we cannot wonder that Thomas could not understand this language of our Lord. But had He not said, “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?” Ch. 6: 62.

6. Je-us might easily have left the doubter without any further effort to explain. But in infinite condescension He goes further, and shows the spirituality of the subject. Thomas had asked how they could know the way—and as this question had respect to their following, Jesus replies on this point for their practical benefit, that He Himself is everything—all in all—“the way, the truth, and the life.” Calvin says, “The sum of the expression is this—whoever possesses Christ, lacks in nothing. But He marks three grades or degrees, and says as it were, that He is the *beginning* and the *middle* and the *end*. Whence it follows that the commencement is to be from Him—in Him it is to be continued and ended.” This is Luther’s view, also. ¶ *The way.* Not merely the *forerunner*, going to prepare the place—but the way for men to the Father—the only way for their getting there—as He shows in the last clause—“the new and living way,” (Heb. 10: 20.) opened for believers through His death—the veil of His flesh being rent for their access to the holiest of all. Had He not already said “*I am the door of the sheep.*” By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.” Ch. 10. Had not the persecuting Pharisees asked “Whither will He go that we shall not find Him?” Ch. 7: 25. And had He not replied, “Ye are from beneath, I am from above.” Ch. 8: 23. Had He not said, “Whoever climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” Ch. 10: 1. ¶ *The truth.* He is not only the way, in His atonement and finished work—the only way of access to the Father—but He is the truth in regard to the way, and the life

to which the way conducts. He had “come a light into the world, that they which see not might see,” (ch. 9: 39,) and “not abide in darkness.” Ch. 12: 44. Peter had confessed, “Thou alone hast the words of eternal life,” and had asked, “Lord to whom (else) shall we go?” Ch. 6: 68. He is, therefore, the object of most implicit faith, in order to get the benefit of Him as the way; for though He is the appointed and only way to God and Heaven, none will enter by Him unless they believe His words. This He had all along insisted on. Besides, He is the substance of all the revealed truth of God. Ch. 5: 46, 47. “In Him we have boldness and access with confidence (to the Father) by the faith of Him.” Col. 3: 12. He is the revelation of the Father. Ch. 1: 18. “In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Col. 2: 3. In Him alone can any man gain that knowledge of God which is eternal life. Ch. 17: 3. ¶ *And the life*—to which the way leads, and which the truth points out. He is the Bread of life—is the Prince of life, (Acts 3: 15.)—and He alone gives eternal life to His people. Ch. 17: 1. Because He lives, they shall live also. vs. 19. Their “life is hid with Christ in God, so that when Christ who is their life shall appear, they also may appear with Him in glory.” Col. 3: 3, 4. This fact becomes the highest motive to holy living. He is “the living way.” Heb. 10: 20. He is ALL IN ALL. See ch. 6: 57; 11: 25. ¶ *No man.* This shows them plainly the glorious place whither He was going, that is—“to the Father”—to His Father’s house, in Heaven, and the way of getting there. This is that *following Him* which He had spoken of, and which they had asked about. Ch. 12: 36. To come to the Father thus in Heaven, we must first come to Him here by prayer and holy living. This we can do only in Christ’s name, and through His merit. And we can never

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I

be reconciled to the Father, except by the atonement of Christ. We can come to the Father with acceptance only by faith in Christ's finished work. This none of us can do "except the Father draw us" by the *Holy Spirit of Christ*. Ch. 6: 44.—How false and wicked is that system of religion which makes *many mediators* between the Father and the sinner—which teaches men to pray to dead saints and to the Virgin Mary, rather than to Christ—and to depend on the act of the priest rather than on the work of our great High Priest and only Saviour. It is the characteristic of His sheep, that they *follow* Him as **THE WAY**, (entering by Him as the door, ch. 10: 9,)—they follow Him as **THE TRUTH**, (for they hear His voice, and they know His voice, ch. 10: 4, 27,) and they follow Him as **THE LIFE**—(for He is come that they might have life more abundantly, and He laid down His life for the sheep.) Ch. 10: 10, 15.

7. *If ye had known me.* Though He was indeed "the way and the truth and the life," they had made but little progress, with all His teachings. He here repeats what He had said, ch. 8: 19. It appears that He had ground for the exhortation in vs. 1, for they had not yet fully known Him, nor the Father. While they looked for new discoveries from some source, He would have them look to Him as all in all, beginning, middle and end—"wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." **OBSERVE**—1. Men look for new revelations, when the great difficulty is, that they do not receive and comprehend what they have. 2. Who would not follow Christ through trial and death, when this is the only way by which we can enter into heaven? "*Follow me,*" He says, and this is not merely a call to Christian duties, but a call to heavenly blessedness. They had not understood

His work—the nature of His kingdom—His real object, and the ends of His mission—else they would have understood the Father's plan. So He would have it urged upon them, at the opening of this consolatory discourse, (vs. 1,) the great need of believing, not only in the Father, but in Himself also. They did not yet understand Him, else they would have understood what He meant by His Father's house, and by their coming to the Father by Him. If they could only understand Christ, they could understand the Father, whom He came to reveal; for He was the way to the Father—the true knowledge of the Father was by Him, and He was the source of that eternal life which is with the Father. ¶ *From henceforth.* He had said, (ch. 13: 31,) "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Looking upon His death and ascension as at hand, He says also here—*from now*—from this time of my glorification, *ye know Him*; these events will reveal Him to you, and you will, after this, understand Him, as revealed in Jesus Christ. You will regard me as the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. Heb. 1: 3; chs. 12, 44, 45; Col. 1: 15; 1 Tim. 6: 16. Besides this, He had now surely made Him known.

8. *Shew us, &c.* Philip started at this idea of seeing the Father, and perhaps thought that some special sight of Him was now to be granted. This, he says, would settle every doubt. But our Lord had meant only that the Father's plans would be revealed to them, so that they would know Him when the great facts of His death and resurrection should soon burst upon them. Instead of receiving the ample testimony which they already had, they looked for some thing different, which they supposed would be more conclusive. But in the parable of the Rich

been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He <sup>a</sup> that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

<sup>a</sup> Col. 1: 15.

man it is testified from heaven, that the Scriptures are as strong and sufficient evidence as any one's rising from the dead could be, or any coming down from heaven. Christ had come from the bosom of the Father, and was not this enough? See ch. 8: 19.

9. *So long time.* More than three years Christ had been with them—instructing them as to His work and kingdom, and oneness with the Father—*working miracles*, to show the Father's union with Him, and testimony to His mission. And no wonder that He exclaims now, at such poor effect of His long presence with Him. ¶ *He that hath seen me.* They had had the Father shown to them by all His life and work. He came from the bosom of the Father on purpose to reveal Him to men—to make known His plans of grace and purposes of salvation. He was “the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person.” “No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” Ch. 1: 18; ch. 12: 44, 45; Col. 1: 15; Heb. 1: 3; 1 Tim. 6: 16. So inseparable is the Father from the Son in essence, though distinct from Him in person, that when the Eternal Word appeared among men, it was a revealing of the Father, and they who properly beheld Christ, by faith, would see Him in this light. This was the truth of His essential oneness with the Father, which the nation so stubbornly rejected. It is, indeed, a great mystery, and only the eye of faith can behold the Father in the Son. This demand, therefore, notwithstanding all His manifestations, to *show them the Father*, as though Christ had not revealed Him, or as though He was to be seen with bodily eyes,

10. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

was only the working of natural and carnal unbelief, quite unworthy of His professed disciples, and most unworthy of His Apostles. It was the same challenge which the Pharisees threw out, (ch. 7: 19,) “*Where is thy Father?*” And our Lord replied there very much as He does here—“If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also”—and this simply because “I and my Father are one.”

10. *Believest thou not?* The point of this question is as to Philip's faith—that he should review it and examine himself. Did he not profess to believe in His oneness with the Father, and did he really believe it? This was the Philip whose faith was tested prior to the miracle of feeding the five thousand. Ch. 6: 6. “Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?” And hence it would appear that he was very slow to apprehend the Godhead of the Son. OBSERVE—1. It is important to question ourselves often upon the first principles of our faith—whether we really believe in a covenant-keeping God—and an omnipotent Saviour. 2. Our practice is often such as to contradict the simplest articles of our faith. We yield to doubt and unbelief in matters that are elementary in our professed creed. Therefore the Saviour pointedly asks—“Believest thou,” &c. ¶ *In the Father.* It is not easy for words to express this mystical and Divine union. It is not to be expected, much less is it to be claimed, that finite creatures, such as we, should understand the modes of the Divine existence. “The Son is in the Father, as light is in that light out of which it floweth without separation. The Father is in the Son as light in that light which it causeth and leaveth not.”—*Hooker*. See ch. 10: 38; 17:

11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you,

He <sup>a</sup> that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 21, 21.

21. ¶ *The words.* Words and works are both spoken of here in such a way as to show that they are equally comprehended in the statement. The idea is, that both the words and works of Christ come from the Father as really as from Himself, because of their essential oneness—and the Father is equally present with Himself in all the words and works. Besides, all the works are an utterance and revelation of the Father. Ch. 5: 19. ¶ *Dwelleth in me.* This is the same term as is used in ch. 15, of the believers *abiding* in Christ. ¶ *Doeth the works.* The Father doeth the miraculous works which prove that the words which I speak are from Him and not from myself.

11. Believe me from the doctrine, the words—or if you cannot take the mystery from the *words*—upon the simple statement, yet believe me from the *works*—from the evidence which my miraculous works afford. Literally, *on account of the works themselves*—simply on that basis. OBSERVE—They ought to have believed in Him for His own sake—they should have credited His statements, simply because they were His. Such an implicit faith in God's word is beautiful, and it is that which our Lord has a right to claim—and which, therefore, He first of all demands. Ch. 4: 42. The faith which rests simply on the evidence of miracles He counted quite inferior, and was not willing to trust it, (ch. 2: 23, 24,) but it was better than none. Ch. 4: 48. It was even a greater witness than John's, which the *works* afforded. Ch. 5: 35. And it would aid the faith of many, and lead from faith in the works to faith in the word. OBSERVE—God often makes His works of Providence a powerful means of grace, leading men from such sensible manifestations of Himself, to credit the simple word

of Scripture—for all His works confirm His word. The revelation which He makes of Himself in His works are intended to illustrate and demonstrate the revelation which He makes of Himself in His word. Hence, it is truly said, “An undevout astronomer is mad,” for he who is conversant with God's works of creation, and does not see Him in them, so as to be led to a belief in His more minute and full revelation in His word, *is mad*.

12. He proceeds now to show how by faith in Him they, the Apostles, should acquire such wonder-working power. It is here promised to them, 1. That they should in the power of Christian faith do the works which He did—that is, they should work miracles in His name, and by faith in Him as the risen Lord—Acts 3, &c.—and 2. That they should even do greater things than work miracles, because His going to the Father would leave the interests of His cause on earth devolving upon them, to carry it forward to a more wonderful development—and especially because He should, at His ascension, receive power and glory for the efficient prosecution of His redeeming work, through their instrumentality. It is not meant that they should do more astounding miracles than He. Nor that they should do of themselves a greater work than He. But it was so ordered in the Divine plan, that the disciples should carry forward what He had begun. Yet it should be by virtue of His sovereign power at the right hand. Acts 5: 15; 13: 11; 19: 12; Mark 16: 17. They should do *greater* things in the conversion of souls, (Acts 2,) and in the extension of the kingdom—(Acts 10)—in the planting of churches and in testifying among different nations—carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles, and bringing about great events, by extensive work-

13 And<sup>a</sup> whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

a 1 John 5. 14.

ing of miracles in the chief cities of the earth. Yet it should all be by virtue of His sovereign power at the right hand on high. Hence the book of "the Acts" is rather a history of the Acts of the risen Lord, through the agency of the Apostles. "He *shed forth*" that which was seen at Pentecost, Acts 2: 33. ¶ *Because I go.* This would be the *reason why* they should do these greater works. He would ascend for this purpose. This was also spoken beforehand, to prepare them for His departure, and to train them gradually to an expectation of blessed results from His ascension. Ch. 16: 7, &c. OBSERVE—The progress of Christianity on earth is directly owing to our risen Lord, who mightily works, in carrying on His kingdom to final victory through His believing disciples. See Matt. 17: 19, 20; Matt. 21: 20-22. 2. It is because of His being exalted, and crowned with glory and honor, as the reward of His sufferings, that we are to work hopefully, and to expect confidently the fruit of our labors. 3. "Christ has sown, and we reap: and the harvest is greater than the seed-time." OBSERVE—We know of not more than 620 disciples (120 in Jerusalem and 500 in Galilee) whom our Lord left on earth at His ascension—while as the result of the preaching at Pentecost, accompanied by the Spirit's outpouring, 3000 souls were converted. Acts 2: 41. Besides this, as the result of the first miracle, and the defence and preaching that followed, 5000 more were converted. Acts 4: 4.

13. The connexion is this. He had appealed to His works in proof of His oneness with the Father, vs. 10, 11. He had shown further, that by virtue of His going to the Father, *they* shall do these same works by faith in Him, and shall even do greater things, vs. 12. (which is also a proof of His oneness with the Father. Acts 2: 33.) And now, still further He shows that it will be *rather His doing*, by means of their

asking the Father *in His name*—and this further proves His oneness with the Father. The risen Lord ascended to the right hand of the Father; that is—to a *share in the dominion*—occupying the mediatorial throne. Ps. 110—also Pss. 2 and 72. ¶ *Whatsoever.* Here the plan for carrying forward His glorious work is further set forth, namely—that He shall be exalted on high, to receive their petitions—as Lord and Christ, (Acts 2: 33, 36,) and to *execute whatsoever they should ask* when presented thus *in His name*, on the ground of His finished work and His promises. Besides this, the asking *in His name*, means, as *properly representing His interest* on earth—asking thus such things as were needful for the promotion of His cause. This implies that from the right hand on high, He will pray the Father, who will send down the Comforter *in His name*, and He shall indite their petitions, for they know not what to pray for as they ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for them, (Rom. 8: 26,) and prayers which He thus prompts in them, (Phil. 2: 13,) He will surely and always execute. ¶ *That will I do.* He will do it by His own power in Heaven; He, as exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, will do it all. Ch. 15: 7. This is not an unlimited grant, to ask what they please—but only what they shall ask *in His name*. If the desire regard only our own will, the prayer is not in the name of the Lord, even though it relate to spiritual good, which may be sought in a wrong spirit. This promise of Christ implies His essential omniscience as well as omnipotence—and it is a distinct assertion of His Personal Godhead. ¶ *That the Father.* The aim and result of this arrangement shall be that the Father shall be glorified by these wonders of grace and triumphs of the Gospel through the Son, as the risen Lord, shedding down His ascension gifts, and *working still* through His servants to



14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

the completion of His kingdom on the earth. Acts 4: 29, 30; 3: 6-8; Phil. 4: 6; 2 Cor. 12: 9; Rom. 15: 18, 19. Besides, the fact that this is His aim, and this the plan of His kingdom, to glorify the Father by the Son's omnipotent work, proves still further the oneness of the Father and the Son. OBSERVE—1. The end of the economy of grace, is the glory of God, by the agency of the Son. 2. This high aim of all the Gospel plan encourages our prayers and labors. It is a plan for glorifying the Godhead, and it must prosper. 3. Whatever we ask of the Father in the name of the Son, the Son performs, and this shows the essential oneness of the Father and the Son. The Son knows of whatever is asked of the Father—and He is able to do it by His own Almighty power.

14. Here He solemnly repeats as a promise what was incidentally asserted before. It is distinctly declared that this promise should extend to "*anything*," "*whatsoever*" they should so ask—and it is emphatically said, "I will do it." The pronoun "I" is here used, as it was not in the former clause, as much as to say, "It is *I* that will do it." The promise is thus virtually repeated and doubled in order to give every assurance to them, and to meet their doubts. It is so emphatically said, "I will do it"—to show them that He will be Himself on high—the same Personal Saviour—and that, as their risen Lord, He would directly act in answer to their prayers. The whole history of the Acts of the Apostles shows that this was the very truth which they were so slow to understand, and which was constantly urged upon their attention. Acts 1: 24; 3: 21, &c.

15. As the asking, however, was to be in His name, so it must be in the way of loving obedience and service. ¶ *If ye love me*. He had exhorted them to believe in Him—in His very essential Godhead, (vs. 11,) and He had uttered the richest promises to them if they should so believe—even

15 If \* ye love me, keep my commandments.

*a c. 15, 10, 14. ver. 21, 23. 1 John 5, 3.*

that He would so fully perform what they should ask believingly. And now He appeals to their love, and it is in this tender form—"If ye love me," as ye profess, and as ye ought, and as is needful for any right prayer and labor, *keep my commandments*. After showing His love to them, He thus appeals to their love to Him, and exhorts them to make practical proof of it. Thus it is that this exhortation connects with verse 11. Faith and love are tested by obedience. Faith *works*, and it works by *love*. Gal. 5: 6. See vs. 23; vs. 21, 24. So John elsewhere remarks, (1 John 5: 3,) "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "Love is the fulfilling of the law," because it prompts to every practical fulfillment. And here this appeal is made to furnish them a solid, uniform principle for the regulation of their conduct in His absence, namely: to prove their love by their obedience. Besides, it is meant to turn away their attention from vain regrets at His personal departure, and to show them that they could most acceptably manifest their love to Him, even while He should be absent from them, namely: by keeping the commandments which He had given them. Ch. 8: 51; 1 John 5: 2, 3. He refers especially to the "new commandment" of love. Ch. 13: 34. ¶ *My commandments*. The commandments of Christ are not naked injunctions of *do this and that*, but when He commands He also gives to believers the grace to obey His commandments. So Augustine used to say—"Only give what thou commandest, then command what thou wilt." Hence we have immediately the promise of this needed helper.

16. *And I will pray, &c.* He promises, therefore, in this very connexion, the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell with them, and to be in them; so that He does not mean to leave them to struggle on, in darkness and doubt, in His absence, but to have His place fully supplied, and more. For

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another

Comforter, \* that he may abide with you for ever;

a c. 15, v. 26.

the Spirit, instead of being confined to places, as He was in the flesh, could dwell in all their hearts at once, and wherever they should be. It was, therefore, a much better arrangement than His continuance with them could be. See ch. 16: 7, &c. The Spirit could abide with them forever, and dwell *with* them and *in* them. How blessed a provision—this gracious and almighty Indweller, who works in the very springs of thought and feeling, and works so sweetly, constraining us so softly and gently, by using the love of Christ as a tender and powerful motive to all obedience. OBSERVE—1. Christ requires obedience to his commands “They are not grievous.” 1 John 5: 3. They are such works as are done by love, through faith in Him. 2. This promise of the Holy Spirit is to be taken in close connexion with His command to obedience, for only thus are we furnished with any ability to do what he requires. The term here rendered “*pray*,” is a term denoting a familiar mode of *asking*, as of friend asking friend, and refers to the essential equality of the Father and the Son. It also hints of His asking *face to face*, as He was to ascend to the Father, and carry on His mediatorial work in heaven. The term meaning to *pray as a suppliant*, is different. In this official character He would intercede for them, and He would obtain this advent of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, as a further step in the glorious Plan of Redemption. ¶ *He shall send.* The Spirit was to be sent as the fruit of Christ’s atoning work. The Father, therefore, is here said to send Him. But in ch. 15: 26, Christ is said to send Him. ¶ *Another Comforter.* The term here rendered “Comforter,” is the Greek word “*Paraclete*.” Whatever it signifies, it was such an office and work as Christ had hitherto performed, for the Holy Spirit was to be “*another*,” as Christ had been *one*. Nay, Christ should continue to be one, but not *bodily present*, as

before. The term also is here used appropriately to the context, both as adapted to what they should require, (in order to keep His commandments,) and to what this Paraclete is to perform, as is stated here and in vs. 26, 27; ch. 15: 26, and in ch. 16. He was to “*teach them* all things, and bring all the things of Christ to their remembrance,” (vs. 26,) while it was doubtless by the Spirit that “Christ was to manifest Himself unto them,” and often come to them in their orphan estate, vs. 18. The Paraclete was also to bear witness of Christ. Ch. 15: 26. He was also to lead them along in the way into all the truth, and He would show them the things to come. He was to take of Christ’s and show unto them—opening to them the excellencies, and unfolding the beauties and glories of Christ to them. Ch. 16: 12–16. He was therefore to be such a *reminder and expounder of Christ*, and of His truth and salvation, as would furnish them the greatest consolation in His absence—and most fully make up for His bodily departure. Nay, they should know more of Christ from the Spirit’s unfolding than they knew by Christ’s own abiding with them—and more than they could know by His continuance with them in the flesh. Thus we see the Spirit was to be a Paraclete by His *comforting instructions and suggestions*, which should be always so *FULL OF CHRIST*. He was also to “*dwell with them, and to be in them.*” This seems to refer to *help and strength*, which He would furnish—standing near as an assistant, and pleading, interceding as an *Advocate*. The term originally means, *one who is called to stand by another*—which was most appropriate here when they thought only of being deserted. Christ is our Advocate with the Father, (James 2: 1,) standing by us with the Father—and standing at the right hand of the Father for us. The word has such a fullness of meaning here, that it is not easy to express all the ideas

17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom <sup>a</sup> the world cannot receive,*

a 1 Cor. 2: 14.

in one term. It combines *Comforter* and *Advocate*. The sense, however, in which the *Spirit* maketh intercession for us, is explained in Romans 8: 26, 27—namely, that it is *within us*, while Christ intercedes *above us*. It is “with groanings unutterable,” that the indwelling Spirit pleads—responsive to the pleading of Christ at the right hand on high. This accords with His office of Teacher, and Reminder of Christ—Christ’s Revealer on earth. As Christ revealed the Father, so the Spirit reveals Christ in all His comforting and beautiful qualities and offices for the soul, ministering thus the most heavenly consolations—leading in Christ’s ways, and opening to the inward sight Christ’s lovely attributes, as by opening a casket and showing the jewels, one by one, in their richest light—“shedding abroad in the heart the love of Christ,” which Christ has shown to us. Rom. 8: . Hence we see, that whether it is comforting, strengthening, advocating, or helping—it is expressly by means of the TRUTH, as it is in *Jesus*, that the Spirit is promised to work. This was just what was needed as the next step in the plan of redemption. It is to be understood that the term “comforter” had the sense originally of *strengtheners*, from Latin *confortare*; and we should bear in mind, says *Hare*, that “the Spirit is the Comforter in the primary as well as the secondary sense of that word, and that He did not come merely to console the disciples for their loss, but mainly to strengthen their hearts and minds, by enabling them to understand the whole truth, and to feel the whole power of the Gospel.”—*Mission of the Com.*, p. 355. ¶ *That He may abide*, &c. Christ must depart to carry on His advocacy on high. The Spirit would be a permanent indwelling Paraclete. What a consolation that He would never leave them. Christ *tabernacled* with them, as in a *tent*, movable and temporary, as the term means. The Spirit abides, dwells in them *forever*, as in a temple never to be taken

down, but immortal as the soul itself. 1 Cor. 6: 19; 3: 16, 17; 2 Cor. 6: 16. They would need His offices at all times, to bring Christ and all His things to remembrance, to lead and guide them into all THE TRUTH as it is in Christ. Ch. 16: 16. OBSERVE—This Paraclete is a Person no less than Christ, and His Personal acts and works are spoken of. So that here the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are brought to view.

17. *The Spirit of truth.* How appropriately, therefore, the Spirit is so called, from all that we have seen of His offices. He is called by this name also, in ch. 15: 26, and ch. 16: 13. The Spirit is called “*Truth*,” by John, (1 John 1: 6,) and here the name means not the true Spirit, as some understand, but the Spirit who is Truth, and who works Truth in us—who leads into all truth, (ch. 16: 13,) who reveals the truth as it is in Jesus, and shows forth Christ as “the Truth.” It is not a single truth to be understood, but the very principle of truth which is here referred to, which overcomes all the vanity and falsehood of the natural, sinful life. Christ came “full of grace and truth.” Ch. 1: 17. And here the Redeemer promises in His bodily absence, the presence of a new and higher principle, namely—the indwelling and working of this Personal Truth in them, to bring their minds and lives into entire conformity with the mind of God. ¶ *Whom the world.* This describes the Holy Spirit—this third person of the Blessed Trinity. Just as the world—the unregenerate world did not receive Christ when He came—so neither will they receive the Spirit. ¶ *Cannot.* Literally—is not able. There is even an inability to receive the Spirit for the reason stated. It is not a physical inability, but a spiritual one—yet it belongs to us by nature. Is is none the less an inability, because it is not a bodily one. It is even *more*, because it is an inability of the heart, about things that belong to the heart. An inability of the eyes

because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and <sup>a</sup> shall be in you.

a Ro. 8. 9. 1 Jno. 2. 27.

would be of small account—for the truths of God's word that could not be read, could be learned from the lips of others. But it is an inability of the inward sense, which is the most serious inability, because it does not lessen the responsibility, and because it is not to be overcome except by divine power. So Paul says, (1 Cor. 2: 14.) "The natural man receiveth not the *things of the Spirit of God*, for they are *foolishness unto him*. Neither can he (*is he able to*) know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The unrenewed world cannot receive the Spirit, because it has no spiritual sense. It cannot discern these things of which the Spirit treats, because they can be apprehended only with another eye. The blind eyeball must be new created before it can receive these rays. There may be a dim sight of outward objects—of shapes and figures and of light as distinct from darkness. But at best, it is only "men as trees walking," that can be seen—not a sentence of God's glorious gospel—not a feature of Jesus' face—not a glimpse of the heavenly glory—because these things are spiritually discerned, and cannot be seen by the carnal eye. ¶ *Because it seeth Him not.* The reason here given for the world's inability to receive the Spirit, is the spiritual nature of the object, not visible as worldly objects are—and they have no faith nor inward discernment of divine things. ¶ *Neither knoweth Him.* The world is not able to know the Holy Spirit experimentally, because they have no spiritual discernment. The spiritual man "looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"—and by faith he communes with God—has fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, (1 John 1: 3.) and has his "conversation (citizenship) in Heaven." Phil. 3: 20. But the natural man neither recognizes the person or work or word of the Spirit—nor *knoweth Him* experimentally. He may be learned enough in worldly

knowledge, and may be acquainted with the great ones of the earth, but God the Spirit he has no knowledge of, as to His person or His work in the heart. 1 Cor. 2: 10-16. "All that the Scripture tells us about the Holy Spirit is regarded by worldly men as a dream, because, trusting to their own reason they despise heavenly illumination."—*Calvin.* ¶ *But ye know Him.* This is the contrast between believers and the unregenerate world. While carnal men make no account of the Spirit, see no need of conversion, and do not understand regeneration, believers make great account of the Spirit, without whose influence they "cannot even think anything as they ought"—"know not what to pray for as they ought." They have constant need of "the communion of the Holy Ghost," and this, therefore, is in the apostolical benediction along with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," and "the love of God," (1 Cor. 13: 14.) and it is what *all* require. Our Lord, therefore, appeals to their experience. They already had inward knowledge of the Spirit, though they may not have learned fully to distinguish His offices and work. ¶ *For He dwelleth with you.* Already the divine Spirit could be said to *dwell—abide with them*—and He was to be given to abide with them more fully and manifestly and *forever*. vs. 16. ¶ *Shall be in you.* He was also to dwell in them, taking up His abode in them, as in a temple. 1 Cor. 6: 19. Hence, Paul the Apostle testifies, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God," &c. 1 Cor. 2: 12. The Spirit in believers works appropriate fruits, (Gal. 5: 22-24,) and His work of sanctification is progressive, and He is needed to continue His abode in them. Hence, believers are exhorted not to *grieve* the Holy Spirit, (Eph. 4: 30.)—not to *quench* the Spirit, (1 Thess. 5: 19,) but to *walk in* the Spirit as a

18 I will not leave you <sup>1</sup> comfortless: I <sup>a</sup> will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the

<sup>1</sup> or, orphans.      <sup>a</sup> ver. 3, 18.

proof of their *living in the Spirit*. Gal. 5: 25.

18. *Leave you comfortless.* The term here rendered *comfortless* means *orphans*; indeed it is the very word "*orphans*," in the Greek. Christ had promised the Spirit as the Comforter, to compensate for His bodily absence, and more. Now, He goes further, and assures them that He is not going so as not to revisit them. He owns His paternal relation to them. The removal of Himself, as their family Head, would seem to them to make them *orphans*. But He will not leave them really bereft. He will still be their family Head in heaven. He would give them evidence in the mission of the Spirit, at Pentecost, of His living interest in them. And personally, as Mediator—God-Man—the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—He would often come to them in special manifestations of Himself by the Spirit. ¶ *I will come.* Literally, *I come, or am coming.* He refers not mainly to the final, second advent, which is rather the climax of his frequent comings, nor to the other bodily advent at the resurrection. It is rather "the great revisitation in all its blessed progress," which He here pledges to them; for the Spirit will take of the things of Christ and show unto them. Ch. 16: 14. By this means they should really see more of Him—see Him more fully, and know and appreciate Him more than they did in the flesh. So Paul testifies—"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him (*thus*) no more." 2 Cor. 5: 16. OBSERVE—1. Christ would come *personally*, only not *bodily*, by the Spirit. 2. The Spirit would make Him more manifest and near to His people than a bodily form could do. 3. How blessed and desirable is this work of the Spirit—how glorious is His person,

world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because <sup>b</sup> I live, ye shall live also.

<sup>b</sup> He. 7: 15.

and how earnestly should His operation be sought when it can be *had at the asking*. Our heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Luke 11: 13.

19. *Yet a little while.* He refers here to the great event for which He would prepare their minds: namely, His withdrawal from human bodily sight, in death. He would be no longer visible according to the flesh; and to the common, worldly view, He would be unseen. ¶ *But ye see me.* There was a sense, however, in which His believing disciples would continue to see Him. The Spirit, whom He would send, would show Him unto them—and they would have inward perception of Him, and holy communion and fellowship with Him. He cannot refer merely to the brief interval of forty days, in which He would show Himself to them after His resurrection, and not unto the world, (Acts 10: 41,) for He would then, again, so shortly leave them, as before. He may include *that*, however, and more than that He refers to the spiritual sight of Him, which would more than compensate for His bodily absence. vs. 17. See ch. 16: 16. ¶ *Because I live.* This habitual sight of Christ by the inward sense, so much nearer and better than that of the bodily sight, where He appears in the very chambers of the soul, and nothing to cloud or color the view, shall come from the spiritual life in them. And this is founded upon His life. This refers to the great truth, that He is the source and "Fountain of Life" to all His people—that they stand in Him as their substitute, righteousness and portion—and that He is "*the Life*." Ch. 1: 4. If He should be crushed by the power of death, His work could not avail them. But He essentially lives—He has the keys of Hell and of Death—He will abolish death by virtue of His Divine Life, and bring Life and immortality to light. 2 Tim. 1: 10.

20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Therefore, though He should seem to yield to death and the grave, He here assures them that He *LIVES*. “I am *He that liveth* and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen! and have the keys of hell and of death. Rev. 1: 18. And *because* He lives—just on this ground of His living, despite of death, and living after death, and living eternally beyond the power of death—just because of His so triumphing over death and hell and having the royal prerogative of Life, *His people shall live also*. Psal. 16: 10, 11; Psal. 21: 4. He laid down His life and took it again, after He had fully accomplished His object in laying it down. In Him was Life, and the life was the light of men. Ch. 1: 4. He hath life in Himself. Ch. 5: 24, 26. He is “that eternal life,” which was from the beginning, (1 John 1, 2.) “He quickens, (raises to life) whom He will.” Ch. 5: 21. His people “shall reign in life by One—Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5: 17. “Their life is hid with Christ.” As true believers have their spiritual life on the ground of His life, so they are to live after death by virtue of His eternal and glorious life in Heaven—“when Christ, *who is their life*, shall appear.” Rom. 8: 10, 11; 1 Cor. 15: 26, 53, 54; 2 Cor. 5: 4; Col. 3: 3, 4; Phil. 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2. **OBSERVE.**—1. This is life in the highest sense, life spiritual and eternal, which we get from Christ and by virtue of His life.

“’Tis not the whole of life to live.”

2. “The world seeth not Christ—but as soon as any man begins to live by the spirit, he is immediately endued with eyes to see Christ. Accordingly when the question is, how are we to obtain life, our eyes must be directed to Christ, and His life must be conveyed to us by faith, that our consciences may be fully convinced that so long as Christ lives we are free from all danger of destruction.”—*Calvin*. “Cause me

21 He <sup>a</sup> that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that

a ver. 15, 23.

to live *in, by* and *according to* thee, O Jesus, my life and my eternal glory.” *Quesnel*.

20. *At that day*. Under the dispensation of the Spirit. This refers to “the uninterrupted course, as it were, of a single day, from the time when Christ exerted the power of his Spirit till the last resurrection.”—*Calvin*. As the prophets were accustomed to speak of the Messiah’s times as “that day,” “in that day,” so here our Lord refers to the times of the Spirit as still more emphatically “that day,” to which all the plans of grace looked forward. This time of the Spirit’s advent is to be a time of peculiar life and knowledge. He promises them, therefore, the knowledge of such high truths as now they stumbled at. How wonderfully these very apostles did afterwards enter into these lofty truths under the ministration of the Spirit. How deeply Peter penetrated them. 1 Peter 1: 1-6, 17-23; 2: 3-12, 21-25. 2 Peter 1: 3-12. And John, in this gospel narrative, and his Epistles and Revelation; and James, in his Epistle. ¶ *I am in my Father*. This was what they did not yet understand. This was the topic which he had been expounding to them, (vss. 10 and 11,) and for which He appealed to the *works*. See *Notes*. ¶ *And ye in me*. This was yet a more practical truth for them to understand. They might not be able to comprehend the relations of the Blessed Trinity, yet they would receive abounding proofs of Christ’s essential Godhead from His resurrection, (Rom. 1: 2,) and from His sending down the Holy Spirit, according to promise, and from His almighty works in the Church, as well as from the whole plan of redemption, as it should be more inwardly revealed to their experience. They would also have practical knowledge of their standing in Him as their only life and hope. They would know that high spiritual

loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love

truth of their being "*in Him*," as the branch is in the vine, (ch. 15,) and of their justification and new creation *in Him*, (2 Cor. 5: 17,) by the working of the Spirit—elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1: 2. ¶ *And I in you.* This doctrine of Christ's being in believers, is collateral with that of their being in Christ. It is a mutual indwelling—*Christ in them* was to be more and more clearly, and the only hope of glory. Col. 1: 27. When He exhorts them to abide in Him, He adds, "and I in you." Ch. 15. "I in them," He says, "and thou in me," (ch. 17: 23,) where He makes His intercessory prayer to the Father: and in vs. 26, He adds, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and *I in them*." This is the deep desire of His soul, to establish this indwelling of His power and grace in them—setting up in their hearts His throne, and thus more fully and firmly identifying them with Himself, as those "given to Him"—as His own (peculiar) people—as His rich and glorious inheritance, and as destined to be with Him forever, where He is. OBSERVE—We are in Christ as His members—we are of His body, His flesh, and His bones, and He is in us by His indwelling spirit, to sanctify and govern us, and to communicate to us, as the Head to the members, or as the heart to the whole man, the life of grace and glory. So John, in the Revelation, records the saying of Christ to him in vision, "I will come into him, and sup with him, and *he with me*," expressing this reciprocal relation. "Accomplish in me, O, my God! these last mysteries of thy love and mercy. Vouchsafe to work that quickly in my heart which thou here promistest."—*Quesnel*.

21. *Hath my commandments.* The Spirit's work aims at a living obedience: and the sanctification of believers is to be accomplished by His

him, and will manifest myself to him.

advent. Therefore our Lord again declares that obedience is the true test of love, as before, (vs. 15,)—and that such personal, vital, habitual conformity to Christ is the proof of His indwelling, and of these close relations just spoken of. It is not mere theory, or dry doctrine, or formal profession. It is living truth, working out in daily practice. To HAVE Christ's commandments means, says *Calvin*, "to be properly instructed in them." To *have* them is surely something more than to have the record of them, or the verbal memory of them. One may *have* them *at his tongue's end*, and not HAVE them. One may have them written in frontlets and phylacteries, and not have them. It means a living possession of them, "laying them up in the heart," and the *keeping* them is a "practicing them in the life." Here our Lord lays down the great principle of the Christian life, that the relation to Christ, can be proved in this way—that mere profession or church connection is not enough—and that the *Christian living* must show the *Christian standing*, as nothing else can: that kind of having, holding, and holding to, and holding fast His commandments, and *KEEPING* them in daily conduct, which will spring from *love* to Him—and which will prove itself as the proper fruit of love—which could not be accounted for, except by the constraining love of Christ—this He distinguishes as the proper mark of His people. ¶ *Loved of my Father.* The Father loveth the Son, and so also He loveth all those who love the Son. He loveth truth and holiness and so He loveth all those who express their love to Christ by truth and holiness of life. It is only as we stand in Christ that we can be looked on with favor by the Father, who loves us purely for Christ's sake. "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed." Ps. 81. There is also another sense in which God's love to us is the cause of our love to Him. "We love

22 Judas \* saith unto him, (not Iscariot) Lord, how is it that thou

*a Lu. 6. 16.*

Him because He first loved us." It is both the efficient cause and the exciting cause of it. But here it is set forth as also the *reward* of our love. So that His love acts first, to work love in us, and then to reward the very love which He has excited in us, by a warmer love towards us; on this account His love supports us in the combat, and then eternally crowns those whom He all along supported! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

1 John 3. OBSERVE—"Hath" and "*keepeth*," in this verse, Augustine understands as "*hath in his memory and keepeth in his life.*" ¶ *And I will love him.* It is not only the Father's love that we get in return for our love to Christ, but the love of Christ also—of the adorable, ever-blessed God-man—the Saviour, Intercessor, and final Judge—the friend that sticketh closer than a brother—the sympathizing High Priest, merciful and faithful. This love has in it a sweetness beyond even the love of the Father. It is closer. "I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3: 20. ¶ *Manifest myself.* This, says Stier, "is the highest promise which can be made to man, and yet it is made to every man who *has and keeps* Christ's commands, out of love to Him." This not only implies a greater discovery of Christ, day by day, on the principle that "then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord," but it includes a personal and gracious manifestation to the soul, in a holy communion and fellowship—as the return for our love to Christ, our love shall be so warmly responded to. vs. 23. This sight of Jesus is, indeed, the most glorious, precious sight in the universe, when He manifests Himself to the inward man, in the chambers of the soul. How much better is this for us, in our present state, than any manifestation

wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

in the flesh to our poor, dull senses, where we might misapprehend Him, and take Him to be a spirit, (Luke 24: 37,) or mistake Him, even at the open sepulchre, for the gardener! Manifest thyself to us, Blessed Saviour, in thy word, in thy providence—in thine ordinances—in the Holy Supper. OBSERVE—Many look for some marvellous manifestations of Christ in a sensible form, instead of looking for Him, where He is to be found, in His gospel. There he gives us the vivid revelation of Himself—there He records for us the answers beforehand to our prayers.

22. *Judas.* This question of the faithful Judas shows, alas! how unspiritual the apostles even were, as yet, in their views of Gospel truth. They thought first of all of a glorious manifestation to the world, according to their Jewish notion of a conquering, earthly king. How utterly is that notion to be crushed out of them, during the next few hours, by His seizure and death! ¶ *Not Iscariot.* This Judas was the brother of James. He was not the traitor, though having the same name. He had also (happily,) other names, as Lebbeus and Thaddeus. Matt. 10: 3. This one was the Apostle—and author of the Epistle of *Jude*. But see that Epistle for the proof of the Spirit's enlightenment according to the promise here. He had received an understanding of this, for he writes of the world, (vs. 19, &c.,) "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." ¶ *How is it.* How different from our natural view is this Gospel plan and doctrine throughout. This is, indeed, a clear



23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and <sup>a</sup> we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings: and the word

<sup>a</sup> 1 John 2. 24. Re. 3. 20.

proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Who would ever have thought of such a manifestation of Christ—to a *few*—and in the Spirit.

23. This is our Lord's answer. He repeats what He had already said, so as to urge this spiritual truth upon the comprehension. In vs. 21, he had spoken of obedience as proving one's love, and now He speaks of love as working out obedience. ¶ *We will come.* Both the Father and Son—which must also include the Spirit, who shows the Son unto us, and sheds abroad His love in the heart, just as the Son reveals the Father. Besides, “the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Cor. 2: 10. ¶ *Make our abode.* They will take up their familiar residence with such. “I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3: 20. The idea of *abode* is that of permanency, not only as distinct from sojourn, but it is the idea of a dwelling, a *mansion*—the same word as is used in ch. 16: 2. “In my Father's house are many *mansions*.” Christ *dwell* among us in the flesh. See ch. 1: 14, where the term expresses a temporary dwelling, as in a tent, tabernacle. The Father and the Son now come by the Spirit—really, but not visibly—personally, but not bodily—and they *make their permanent abode* with every believer. The Father is recognized and embraced by that Spirit of adoption which He hath sent forth as the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba, Father. Rom. 8: 15; 2 Cor. 6: 16; 1 Cor. 3: 16; 6: 19. OBSERVE—It is only such a heart of love and obedi-

which ye hear, is not mine, but the Father's, which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

26 But <sup>b</sup> the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he <sup>c</sup> shall

<sup>b</sup> ver. 16. <sup>c</sup> c. 16. 13. 1 Jno. 2: 10, 27.

ence that God can dwell in—only such a heart as is prepared by the Spirit—swept and garnished for His abode.

24. The reason is here given why this communion cannot be had with the ungodly world. They do not *keep His sayings*. And this is no small matter, nor is it an arbitrary distinction, for this “word” is here shown to be of the highest authority. And “as these who show their love to me by keeping my words, will be loved both by me and my Father; so, on the other hand, they who, loving me not, do not keep my sayings, will be excluded as well from my Father's love as from mine; since the word which ye hear from me is not mine only, but my Father's also who sent me.” Ch. 5: 19; 7: 16.

25. *Yet present.* As though He had said, I have spoken these things to you while I tarry here in the flesh. But though you do not yet understand them, there is a provision even for this—and this more inward unfolding of these things to you will be the peculiar office-work of the Holy Spirit.

26. *The Comforter—He.* Many find it most difficult to conceive of the personality of the Holy Spirit. But—the “*Spirit is just that very thing itself, which is personal.*”—*Obs.* Our Lord here for the first time tells them most distinctly that the Paraclete (or Comforter) is “the Holy Ghost;” though He had spoken of Him before as “the Spirit of Truth.” vs. 17. ¶ *In my name.* That is as the Spirit of Christ, (Rom. 8: 9,) in whom the Father testifies concerning Christ, and who takes of Christ's things and shows them unto us. Ch. 16: 14. The Father would send Him “in the name of” Christ, that is, to carry forward to completion

teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,

whatsoever I have said unto you.

the gracious work which Christ had begun. He would urge the great work of *sanctification*. In ch. 16: 7, Christ speaks of *Himself* as sending Him, and in ch. 15: 26, as sending Him "*from the Father*," which He did. See Acts 2: 33. ¶ *He shall teach you all things.* Our Lord being yet present with them could teach them only a few things comparatively, and these only partially, as they could not yet understand them. The Spirit was "to supply all their need"—to teach them inwardly and fully all things, especially that belonged to their apostolic office-work—whatever they should require to know in founding the church, in recording the scriptures, and in carrying forward the interests of His kingdom. By "all things" here, is not meant every item or branch of possible knowledge—as about science, and worldly learning, but all things requisite in their circumstances. The church of Rome takes this as the promise of further revelation continually, through the church. Fanatics and Pantheists use the passage to support their idea of individual illuminations beyond what is written. As Tholuck has well said, it is only the blade from the seed that we are at most to expect—the unfolding of the same truth which Christ has already deposited here. "And observe how Paul, in opposition to those who would complete Christianity from without by philosophical tenets, declares, "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Coloss. 2: 3. OBSERVE—This is a clear promise of the Spirit's infallible guidance. The Apostles were inspired men. They not only claimed this, but *Christ here distinctly promises them the gift of Inspiration. And, if they were not inspired, His promise was not fulfilled to them.* ¶ *Bring all things to your remembrance.* Otherwise they would be liable to forget many sayings and teachings of Christ, which they would need to recollect in preaching and composing the gospel narratives, and in founding and in-

structing the churches. In the course of three years He had delivered to them so many precious doctrines, predictions, precepts, warnings and consolations, that naturally they would not retain them all, especially as they understood them so poorly, and now He promises to quicken their memories by His Divine Spirit, so that they should recall fully and promptly, as it might be needed, whatever He had said to them. He would be thus not only a teacher, but a Remembrancer. And in both these offices He would most perfectly serve their necessity. But, besides quickening their memories to recall the sayings of Christ, the Spirit would also bring these things to mind in their freshness and fullness of meaning—opening them to the understanding in their true light as the unassisted memory could not do—illuminating their minds—"shedding abroad," (like a river) "the love of God in the heart." Rom. 5: 5. So it was in regard to His saying about the temple. Ch. 2: 17-22. So it was in regard to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Ch. 12: 16. OBSERVE—It is on the fulfillment of this promise to the Apostles that the inspired authority of their writings in the New Testament is grounded. It is on this ground that we receive their testimony, in respect to all that our Lord did and taught, as an INFALLIBLE testimony. OBSERVE—Our Lord shows that every way, this advent of the Paraclete would be to their advantage. Even in the matter of instruction, while they were so wont to hang upon the lips of the God-man, and could not see how they could find His absence compensated, He shows them the wonderful provision made for their permanent tuition—and that, by this means, the things which He had said and which they had forgotten, would be wonderfully and beautifully recalled, and they should thus lose nothing of His teachings, and should gain more abundant and complete instruction. OBSERVE—"The

27 Peace \* I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

a Eph. 2. 14, 17. Ph. 4. 7.

difference between Christ's teaching and that of the Spirit—and yet their sameness. It was the same teaching, but in a different way. Christ taught them—the Holy Ghost made them understand. The word gave the *doctrine*. The Spirit gave the *capacity*. The Saviour was a teacher *with* them. The Comforter was a teacher *within* them. The change, therefore, was not to be so much in the teaching, as in themselves—as when a man's eyes are dim and you give him a Bible, and he can scarcely read it. The word is God's word—but its use to him is small. Let his eyes be healed, however, and what a change comes over his use of it. It is the same: but to him, at the same time, how different! The teaching of the Spirit makes the teaching of the Son of Man available." OBSERVE—How false is the theory of those who charge these inspired writers with inaccurate memories. OBSERVE—"The Spirit will not be a builder of new revelations. By this single word we may refute all the inventions which Satan has brought into the church from the beginning, under the pretence of the Spirit."—*Calvin*. The Apostolic benediction pronounces this as the sum of gospel blessings for the people of God. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." 2 Cor. 13: 14.

27. *Peace I leave, &c.* This hints of His speedy departure, and most sweetly speaks the word of parting. This was customary among friends. Peace is the common oriental salutation and benediction and farewell. See 1 Sam. 1: 17; Luke 7: 50; Acts 16: 36; 1 Pet. 5: 14; 3 John 15; also, Gen. 43: 23; Jud. 6: 23. It was not, however, an empty word with our Lord. The world can say "Peace," and can do nothing to give it. He speaks, therefore, of *leaving it with them*, and He could not leave with them what He

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said

had not in possession. He promises to leave it with them, that it should be theirs after His departure—in His absence. This was most consolatory. What could they want more than *peace* from the Prince of Peace? This one word strikes at the root of a thousand apprehensions and anxieties. It was better than to say, "I leave friends with you, and earthly possessions"—for with these there might be no peace. If we have *peace*, it is just that which all the rest of our possessions aim to give us. It is just what we want of them; and they are worth nothing if they give us not this. OBSERVE—How one word of this Gospel, as Luther has said, is often like the very gate of Paradise, "*Peace*," "*Rest*." We are to get peace from Christ, through His Word and Spirit. "These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace." Ch. 16: 33. ¶ *My peace I give*. This is emphatic. He not only promises general peace, but that peculiar peace which is His—which can come from Him alone. "The *peace of God*, which passeth understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4: 7, 9; Col. 3: 15. This peace, which is distinguished from every other, He gives in actual donation to them at the time—and this is what He was all along to do. It seems also to be implied that as believers are to *enter into His joy* by virtue of His merit imputed to them, so the peace which He gives is the very peace which He enjoys in Himself. So He is called by Isaiah "the Prince of Peace." Is. 9: 5. ¶ *Not as the world giveth*. In a thousand empty forms the world gives peace, but gives only the name. In a thousand deceitful promises and vain hopes, it gives only the shadow and counterfeit after all. But He gives it as its rightful possessor, and gives it pure from the fountain, and gives it to be as eternal as Himself. The world often gives tribula-

unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I<sup>a</sup> go unto the Father: for

a ver. 12.

tion without peace. Ch. 16 : 33. Christ gives peace in the midst of tribulation. ¶ *Let not your heart, &c.* He saw that they grieved at His speedy departure; and in addition to all the consolation He had spoken, He bids them be comforted, and take the peace He gives them. He would have them dismiss their trouble and their fear. This He had urged (vss. 1 and 2,) by all the confidence they had in the Father and in Him.

28. *Ye have heard.* See vss. 12, 18, 23. He had frankly told them that He was going, and for what purpose, namely—to prepare a place for them—and that He would also return to them to take them to Himself. vss. 2, 3. ¶ *If ye loved me.* Now He declares to them that this departure was connected with His highest interests as well as theirs, and that, therefore, instead of grieving for themselves, they should rejoice on His account, while the secret of the matter was that His exaltation was also theirs. “For the kingdom which I shall receive at the right hand of the Father is over all, and it is better that I should pass from earthly littleness and infirmity into the power and dominion in which the Father is.”—*Luther.* ¶ *My Father is greater.* This is said only in the plain sense which is implied. vss. 2 and 3. He was now to end His humiliation, and go to His own eternal home—to “the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.” Ch. 17 : 5. “Christ does not here compare the Godhead of His Father with His own, nor His human nature with the divine essence of the Father, but rather His present condition with that heavenly glory into which He was soon to be received.”—*Calvin.* He refers here to His state of humiliation. But now He was to go to the Father to be crowned with glory and honor—to receive the reward of His death, and

my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to pass; that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

b 1 Cor. 15. 27, 28.

to sit on the right hand of power to send the Spirit down, and as the risen Lord to carry forward, most effectively, the great work which He had begun. How should He hold back? Would they have Him forfeit all His reward—leave His work unfinished—and remain in this state of humiliation beyond the necessary time? This would also be their perdition. Now, therefore, if they loved Him, they would rejoice at His entering into His glory—at His being crowned King of kings and Lord of lords—at His receiving gifts for men—and at His so successfully triumphing over death and hell in the last great conflict—especially when it was not for Himself only, but for them also. OBSERVE—This passage is to be taken in connexion with others in which He speaks of Himself as “in the Father, and the Father in Him, (vs. 10,) as one with the Father, (ch. 10 : 30,) and as not separate from the Father; but so that they could both be seen and known under one, vss. 7, 9. Christ here refers to His going to the Father, as the head of the glorious Trinity, in the plan of redemption. See Phil. 2 : 5–11; see ch. 17 : 1, 2, 5; Eph. 1 : 20–22; Heb. 1 : 3, 4; 2 : 9; 12 : 2. In ch. 10 : 29, He said, “My Father which gave them me is greater than all,” and in vs. 30 He said, “I and my Father are one.” Both declarations are true, and must be interpreted so as to consist with each other. We must receive them both, because they are both revealed, even though we may not be able to harmonize them perfectly.

29. This shows how tenderly He was looking forward to the coming trial of their faith, and was fortifying them by telling them beforehand what should take place. The effect would naturally be, that they would be reminded of these sayings by the events

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince<sup>a</sup> of this world cometh, and hath nothing<sup>b</sup> in me.

a c. 16. 11. Ep. 2. 2. b 2 Cor. 5. 21. He. 4. 15. 1 Jno. 3. 5

which were so near—and that His foresight of them, which would thus be proved, would prove Him to be God, and show that His work was planned from the beginning. So they did often recall His sayings, under the suggestions of the Spirit, and thus they found their faith strengthened. See ch. 13: 19.

30. *Hereafter, &c.* He now gradually closes up the discourse, and declares again the near approach of His and their conflict. He will not have much more to say, but some more He will have occasion to say. ¶ *The Prince of this world.* This was Satan. He had met our Lord in the wilderness at the threshold of His ministry, and when He was defeated, departed from Him only “for a season.” See Luke 4: 13; ch. 22: 53. As he tempted Him with the bait of *pleasure* then, so now he tries Him by means of *fear*. Matt. 4. He is called “the Prince of this world,” because the world is yet subject to him—under his sway. He is “the Prince of the power of the air—the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience.” ¶ *Hath nothing in me.* He possesses nothing within me which he can call his. There is nothing within me, in league with him—nothing upon which he can lay hold for his attack. There was no evil sentiment or tendency in our Lord with which Satan could co-operate. Only those who have something in them to respond to Satan’s suggestions, can be overcome. A cunning searcher hath pried narrowly into every corner of His heart and life, and if there had been anything amiss, would have been sure to have spied it and proclaimed it, but he could find nothing—he has, holds, possesses nothing in him. Therefore, Satan should not triumph, but should be defeated in the conflict. His death would result not from Satan’s victory, but from the eternal plan of

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as<sup>c</sup> the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

c Ps. 40. 8. Ph. 2. 8.

redemption. For “He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross.”

31. But my death, He adds, is an act of voluntary obedience, (ch. 10: 18; 15: 10,) springing from a loving fidelity to the Father, in the work given me to do. Ch. 17: 4, 5. Read the parting prayer (ch. 17) throughout. He was to go through death to the Father, according to the Divine plan, and in obedience to the Father’s commandment, for the world’s redemption. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son,” &c. Ch. 3. “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Ch. 17: 21. Thus He was aiming to vanquish the Prince of this world, by extending His kingdom among men through His death. It was to be the preaching of *Christ crucified*, by which the world should be savingly enlightened in regard to the true intent of His work and His true relations to the Godhead. “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” OBSERVE—It is when we see Christ’s death in its true light, not merely as the death of an innocent man, but as the death of the atoning Redeemer, that we see clearly all the great truths of the Gospel, and understand all His life and His work. “We preach Christ crucified—unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness—but unto them that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24. ¶ *Arise.* This touching discourse is now closed by the summons to move from the table. They had been in the large upper guest-chamber, at the Sacred Supper which He had instituted beforehand, as a memorial of His death.

## CHAPTER XV.

¶ I AM the true  
vine,<sup>a</sup> and my

a ls. 4. 2.

## CHAPTER XV.

§ 139. CHRIST THE TRUE VINE, &c.—  
*Jerusalem.*

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 15. 1-27. |

It has been supposed by some that the figure of the Vine was suggested by the vineyards on the way to Gethsemane—or by the vine carved on the great doors of the temple; and that the company passing towards Gethsemane, rested in one of the porches of the sacred edifice. This would be possible, except that we have reason to suppose, that such a discourse would scarcely have been delivered to them as they walked along the public street, and seems more likely to have been uttered after they had risen from the table, and were standing ready to depart. Having risen to go, they linger. Departing, yet tarrying, the impulse to communicate still more, detains the Saviour in the room. It is not necessary to suppose any thing immediately suggesting this idea of the Vine, and if any were needed, “the cup,” and the fruit of the Vine,” in the sacred Supper, just instituted, had also been the subject of special meditation and of special prediction. Luke 22: 18.

Besides—this figure of a Vine by which to represent the close relations between Himself and His church, was familiar to them all in the Old Testament scriptures. Isa. 5: 1; Jer. 2: 21; Ezek. 19: 10; Ps. 80: 8-19; Joel 1: 7. The idea that they were familiar with, however, was that the *Church* was the *Vine*, only that it was of His planting. Here, however, He declares that they are only the branches, of which He is the stalk and root. This shows the cheering truth that they live in Him, and hence, that the church is safe in Him—and that all that is required of them can be done through His life and strength, in which they

Father is the husbandman.<sup>b</sup>

2 Every<sup>c</sup> branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

b Ca. 8. 2. c Matt. 15. 13.

are to abide. The CHRISTIAN LIFE is now set forth in its hidden principles and plain duties. This doctrine was here most important and timely, as Vine and branches were now to encounter a most severe trial. It seems altogether most probable that they had not yet gone from the supper-chamber, since ch. 18: 1, speaks of their then *going out on the road*.

1. *The true vine.* So He calls Himself “the *true Bread*,” (ch. 6: 32,) the *true Light*, (ch. 1: 9,) says John—He is what the earthly Bread and Light signify as only patterns of the true. He fulfills in Himself in the highest sense, all the excellencies of these. The term here used is not the common word for *true*, but means *original*, of which the others are only copies after their poor sort, and this the antitype and archetype. “The natural relation between the vine and its branches, shooting forth in all the glories of their noble fruit, is realized in its most perfect sense, (*ἡ ἀληθινή.*) in the spiritual relations.” That which Paul says of the mystical union between the Redeemer and His church, has found its most beautiful expression in this language of our Lord.—*Tholuck*. So Isaiah introduces “the servant of Jehovah,” as a complex personage, including the Messiah and His church, of which He is the Head. Isa. 42: 1-4.—The drapery is not that of the parable, but rather of an allegory. It is no event in history, but a relation in the world of nature, which is spoken of; and this is employed from the commencement to express a spiritual relation—so that the literal and figurative meaning run into each other. OBSERVE—The connection between the Vine and branches is much closer than that between the shepherd and sheep, and it more nearly answers to that in Ephes. 5: 23, 36, between the Head and the members. It is one and the same life which animates them, and the life of

and every *branch* that <sup>a</sup> beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it

<sup>a</sup> He. 12. 15. Re. 3. 19.

the branches is dependent on the life of the stalk and of the root. ¶ *The husbandman.* The Father is always spoken of as the Head in the counsels of Redemption. His commission the Son executes, as Redeemer. So Paul, (Heb. 3: 4.) "Every house is builded by some (man,) but He that built all things is God." Hence, Christ will at length be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15: 28. The Father is therefore appropriately enough styled the husbandman—or more literally the *vine-dresser*. As such He has planted the Vine in our human soil—watches over it with Divine care—both stalk and branches. He has to do with this relation between the branches and the Vine, between Christ's people and Christ Himself, and He looks for the appropriate fruit.

2. *Every branch.* The whole treatment of the Vine is such as well to illustrate our Heavenly Father's discipline of us. The old dead wood of a vine is known to be of positive injury to the fertility of the plant. The skillful pruning has more to do with the yield than any other one thing, in ordinary circumstances. ¶ *Beareth not fruit.* He has to do with *two kinds* of branches—the unfruitful and the fruitful. There were branches that bore no fruit—dead branches—never having had any thing but leaves—and utterly worthless, detracting from the vigor and value of the vine. These are the external professors—the merely baptized members, who have no life and never had—though they belong to the outward connection. "Christ intends by these words to awaken anxious inquiry, by declaring that all the unfruitful branches will be cut off from the vine. But here comes a question—Can any one who is ingrafted into Christ be without fruit? I answer, many are supposed to be in the vine, (according to the opinion of men,) who actually have no root in the vine."—

23\*

may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now <sup>b</sup> ye are clean through

<sup>b</sup> c. 17. 17. Ep. 5. 26. 1 Pe. 1. 22.

*Calvin.* ¶ *He taketh away.* All such merely nominal Christians—mere professors—those belonging only to the outward pale, and yielding no fruit, *He removeth*—He cuts off their connection. This is due to the vine and to the other branches. It is due to Christ and to His church that false professors should be removed. This our Heavenly Father does in various ways. By trial and affliction, as is shown in the parable of the sower—by choking cares of this world. In the slight rooting or jointing to the stalk, where no life is derived, the scorching heat withers it, and persecution is a rough handling, which easily breaks it off from its very slight connection. God also removes such from the church, by its lawful discipline and by death. ¶ *Purgeth—cleanseth.* The fruit-bearing branches are dealt with according to the nature of the plant, as it is well known to the Great Vine-dresser. This purging, or cleansing, is the stripping off of *worthless leaves*, (of pretension,) and of superfluous tendrils, (of worldly conformity,) where the branch puts out too much of its strength for mere show, without any gain to the fruit, but with positive damage to it. This the Divine hand so skillfully and tenderly does, by His own gracious and wise methods—by His word—by His providence—by His ordinances—by His Spirit—by severe winds, that blow off the useless leaves, and by whatever dealing may be needful to separate the superfluous shoots that take away the vigor from the branch. He takes away property, worldly connections, children—blasts secular enterprises that have too much engrossed the heart, and thus He prunes and cleanses the fruit-bearing branch. ¶ *More fruit.* This is His gracious object—to make it more fruitful, more valuable. OBSERVE—It is on this account that we are not to despise God's chastenings, nor faint under His rebukes—for they are thus to His people an indication of His love

the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide <sup>a</sup> in me, and I in you. As <sup>b</sup> the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the

<sup>a</sup> 1 Jno. 2. 6. <sup>b</sup> Hos. 14. 8. Ga. 2. 20. Ph. 1. 11.

and tender, faithful care. "What is man, that thou visitest him every morning, and triest him every moment." Ps. 8; James 1: 1-4. OBSERVE—"He here shows what ought to be the progress of believers in the course of true religion."—Calvin.

3. Now ye are clean. He speaks this for their comfort, as they might tremble to think that they were possibly of the unfruitful sort that were to be removed. He does not say, ye are of the fruitful kind, but ye are *clean*. The term is taken from the verb just used, (*kathairei*),—*purgeth*—and now He says, ye are (*katharoi*) *purged* or *cleansed*. They were so already by anticipation, and in foresight of what His word should accomplish in them. They were in process of this purging through His word. Already they were to some extent cleansed. See Coloss. 3: 9, 10. His instructions had rectified many of their views—and Judas had been removed from their circle. So in Eph. 5: 26. Christ is said to have "loved the church that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified," &c. 1 Cor. 6: 11. This great truth had been already represented to Peter, by the towel and basin, and he had been given to understand and yield assent to it. Ch. 13: 6-10. They were then pronounced cleansed, excepting as to the *fret*, which needed a new washing daily. And then He said to them in these very words, "*Ye are clean—but not all.*" Judas also was a dead branch that needed removal, and now at the Supper this had just been done. OBSERVE—"Christ does not mean that the Apostles were clean from all sin, but He holds out to them their experience that they may learn from it that the continuance of grace is absolutely ne-

cessary. Besides, He commends to them the doctrine of the Gospel from the fruit which it produces, that they may be more powerfully excited to meditate on it continually, since it resembles the vine dresser's knife, to take away what is useless."—Calvin.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth

cessary. Besides, He commends to them the doctrine of the Gospel from the fruit which it produces, that they may be more powerfully excited to meditate on it continually, since it resembles the vine dresser's knife, to take away what is useless."—Calvin.

4. The word itself would not be enough without a vital, personal union with Him. Here is something which they, as living branches, are to care for—their abiding connexion with Him. As we stand in Christ by faith, so we are to stand fast in Him—abide and dwell in Him, by the diligent use of all appointed means—by "His ordinances, as His word, the sacraments and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation." ¶ *And I in you.* This is involved in the former. It is a mutual relation. If the branch is united to the vine, the vine is united to the branch. The duty, therefore, involves so great a privilege. Our earnest care to abide in Christ, secures His abiding in us. ¶ *As the branch.* Now He shows the importance to them, in all the Christian life, of having this vital union with Him. They would be just as fruitless apart from Him as the branch would be when separated from the vine. The Christian life is as naturally and beautifully fruitful where this connexion is maintained—where the love of Christ is shed abroad in the heart—and where there is an abiding and vital connexion with Christ—as the bough of the vine, well pruned, is loaded with clusters. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Ephes. 5: 30. OBSERVE—Any professing Christians who are living without deriving their life from Christ—without prayer and fellowship and filial service—are fruitless, of course. "To me to live is Christ."



forth much fruit: 'for without me ye can do nothing.

1 or, severed from me.

5. This verse explains the figure in its proper force and its present relation to themselves, as they already must have understood. How wonderful—how gracious, that the Saviour would deign to acknowledge creatures and sinners as branches of Himself, deriving of His life. This is the plan of grace. The life of God in the soul of man is so operative that we live by His life, and thus it becomes *Christ* for a Christian to live. This is the definition and description of his life—*CHRIST*. ¶ *He that abideth*, &c. The great truth already stated negatively is now further expressed positively—the dependence of the believer on Christ, as his life. Not only can no one bring forth fruit without abiding vitally in Him, but, more than this, by abiding in Him, even such branches as we are will produce fruit, and much fruit. This is the plain doctrine of the Christian life. No good works in the sight of the Judge, can be brought forth, except in vital union with Christ, and then they are produced out of His life, by virtue of His spiritual energy in us. And so it is that it is "*much fruit*"—for it is owing to His life, and not to our independent life. This makes it *much*, where in itself it would be *little*. ¶ *For*. The reason is here given, namely, that this connection is so indispensable and vital, that nothing can come forth without it. ¶ *Without me*. Separate from me—in this state of separation from the vine—not deriving of its life. ¶ *Nothing*. That is, *nothing*, as Christ, the Final Judge, estimates it. One may do many amiable things—*things excellent*, according to human judgment. One may "*have whereof to glory, but not before God*." Rom. 4: 2. Here the great truth is plainly stated which was pictorially represented in the previous language. Even these Apostles could do nothing without Him—nothing for the establishment of the church, and nothing for common Christian living. "Without faith it is impossible to

6 If "a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is

a Matt. 3. 10; 7. 19.

please Him," (Heb. 11: 6,) because faith it is which keeps up the vital connexion and derives of the Divine life. 2 Cor. 3: 5.

6. *If a man*, &c. This is a general statement, that further keeps up the figure, and sets forth the case of a professing Christian, who does not abide in Christ. This may refer to those outward branches that do not bear fruit, (vs. 2,) which have only a formal, dead connexion—or it may be laid down here as a general principle, that shall set them on their guard against apostacy, as possible enough in itself, and impossible to true believers, only by the grace of God. So Calvin says, "Not that it ever happens that any one of the elect is dried up, but because there are many hypocrites who, in outward appearance, flourish and are green for a time, but who afterwards, when they ought to yield fruit, show the very opposite of that which the Lord expects and demands from His people." If, however, it is insisted that these branches are said to be *in Christ*, and must therefore be regarded as having a living connexion, then we must understand the Saviour as stating a most solemn truth, applicable to all who regard themselves as *in Christ*—that this vital connexion is indispensable to salvation, that it must be kept up, and that if one regarding himself a true believer should depart from Christ, and live apart from Him, the sad results here stated would follow. Final apostacy, however unsupposable in the case of real Christians, is to be warned against. So Paul warned all on ship-board, that if they remained not on board the ship, they would surely be lost. Yet he was assured in a vision, that not one would be lost, and none of them was lost. The warning, however, was none the less necessary. It was part of the decree. They were to be kept on board the ship by the warning, and by being kept thus they were saved. (Acts 27: 31—

withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

34.) ¶ *Cast forth—cast out.* This is what must be experienced by every one who departs from Christ—who does not stand, and abide, and live in Him. He will be treated like a worthless, dead branch. ¶ *Men gather them.* The word “*men*” is not found in the Greek, except impersonally—“they gather them,” any one and every one. This is the treatment which apostates receive at the hands of men. They are commonly despised in the community. Their characters are severely handled. They are pointed at as hypocrites. They are dealt with as men deal with stubble. Many stand ready, with no little care, to *gather up* all such cases, and it is often a most scorching ordeal that they are subjected to from their fellow men. ¶ *They are burned.* Literally—*They burn.* They are used as fuel, (Matt. 6: 30,) in which there may be an allusion to the fire of hell. This is fearfully applicable to hypocrites, dead professors, and apostates who go back unto perdition, (Heb. 10: 39,) having had no real, living, abiding connexion with Christ—who are only as a branch that is fixed upon a stalk for a deception, as distinguished from a living branch. These will be gathered by the angels, (Matt. 13: 40–42,) and cast into hell fire. Compare the parable of the sower, in which those hearers who spring up quickly, but without root, making a fair profession, do yet wither under the scorching heat of persecutions and afflictions, and are cast into eternal perdition. OBSERVE—1. Our Lord could not possibly have intended to teach that any true Christian can fall finally away—that any living branch, once growing up into Him, can be cast out with the stubble into the fire of perdition, because He had just taught the impossibility of this. Ch. 10: 28, 29. “Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” 2. Warnings addressed to true Christians, as to the fearful consequences of apostacy, are needful, be-

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye<sup>a</sup> shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

a c. 16. 23.

cause they are to be kept from falling away, in the use of means and by such motives and considerations as our Lord here deems it proper to use. So Paul says, “If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.” Heb. 10: 26. And again, Heb. 6: 8, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c., if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” 3. We can have no valid evidence of being the Lord’s, except so far as we can show the life of piety, and exhibit some fruits of grace in the heart and life. The branches which do not incorporate with the tree, but hang upon it as dead stuff, or fall off, are gathered by the vine dresser for the fire. So John the Baptist, in substance declared: “The axe is laid at the root of the tree.” Matt. 7: 19; 3: 10.

7. *If ye abide in me.* This is added now to meet the deep feeling of want which the true Christian has when he considers what he ought to bring forth, and how much he falls short. Our Lord well knew that many a true disciple would begin to fear from what he had just said, that he might be a cast-away. Now therefore He provides comfort for the hungry soul. See 1 Cor. 1: 5. It is the vital union with Him, even more than any evidence of an hour’s devotions, that must stand us for life. There is here a large promise—but it is only to such as maintain a living, abiding connection with Christ—partaking of His life. ¶ *And my words.* That is, if we abide by a vital union in Him, and live according to His plan in the gospel, as enjoined, vs. 4, we shall be fruitful. But how? In such case we shall ask for things agreeable to His will, and so He will hear us. 1 John 5: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 23. ¶ *Ye shall ask what ye will.* See vs. 16. For thus abiding in Him we can will only in accordance with

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

His will, as His words abide in us, and we have a living connection with Him. "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3: 22. This large promise is repeated from ch. 14: 13, 14, where we are to have whatever we ask in His name, on the ground of His atonement, and for the promotion of His glory with a deference always to His will. OBSERVE—

1. This is spoken with direct reference to the Apostles, and was immediately and especially applicable to them, as commissioned to spread the gospel. But through them it comes also to us, even to every believer, though he be the obscurest of all. 2. Many believers who feel no confidence in their fruit or inward evidences, can be sure of their sincere desire to be such as Christ would have them to be. And this promise is for their consolation. "*Prayers themselves are fruit, and they increase the fruit.*"—Bengel.

8. *Herein*, &c. This refers not merely to the *much fruit-bearing*—but also to what has gone before, including the whole plan and process which results in *much fruit*—the mystical vital union, the Christian prayer, &c. See ch. 15: 16. If any should ask whether a little fruit would not suffice, wishing to know only how little they could do and get to Heaven, our Lord sets the standard high and calls for *MUCH*. They who aim at *glorifying* the Master and not merely at saving themselves, will bring forth *much fruit*. As respects the Apostles, they were to be animated by large views of their work, and not to be satisfied with small things. OBSERVE—1. Every true Christian will aim at great things, and ought to ask for great things, and expect great things. 2. Our principle of conduct should be not to do *as little as we can*, consistently with being saved, but to do *as much as we possibly can*. ¶ *So shall ye be*. Literally—*And ye shall*

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

be. Bengel reads, *Herein I will have disciples bringing honor to me*. The Wiclif, and Tyndale and Geneva versions read, "And that ye be made my disciples." Cranmer and Rheims—"And become my disciples." Calvin—"That you may become my disciples." The Syriac reads, "And ye will be my disciples." Tholuck—"And so will ye be." The idea is, that this large fruit-bearing will honor Him as well as the Father—will show them to be His disciples while it will glorify His Father. OBSERVE—Those who profess Christ and bring forth *little fruit*, put dishonor upon Him. For the fruit that is produced by a vine of any given name, is to the credit or reproach of that name. That "this fruit—so poor, is called *so*, or *so*," is the report everywhere, to the disgrace of that kind of vine, wherever spoken of. Claiming that this is the fruit of that vine which is Christ—borne on His stalk, they profess that this is the proper fruit of *His life*, and the kind of fruit which He bears. Just as the branch puts forth its fruit as the fruit of the *vine*, so the professing Christian says: This living of mine is *Christian*—that is—*it is like Christ—the fruit of Christ*, which is as much as to say that Christ is of that nature—and so it degrades Him. A fruitful profession will bring honor to Him.

9. *As the Father*. He now declares the height and depth of His love to them, in order to provoke their love to Him. Wonderful indeed is it that He should have loved us sinners in any manner to compare with the Father's love to Himself. Thus it is that we are called "the sons of God." 1 John 3: 1. The highest possible affection is that with which the Father has always loved His only-begotten Son. Matt. 3: 17; 17: 5. It is in Him that the Father looks upon us and loves us, and Christ, looking upon us as the purchase of His death, calls us not servants but friends. Ch. 15: 15. "For whom He

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's

a c. 14. 21, 23.

did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." Rom 8. ¶ *In my love.* Literally—*Abide in the love that is mine.* Not "continue to love me," but abide in the knowledge and acknowledgment of the love which I bear to you—continue to enjoy it, and to glory in it. So the Apostle, arguing about the glorious greatness of the love of God to sinners, in Christ, comes to the transporting conclusion, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—that is, from the love which Christ bears to us, and from His love as revealed to us in the plan of salvation, which is by virtue of His love.

10. *If ye keep.* The direction for abiding in His love is here given, and it is full of meaning. It is only by keeping His commandments that we obtain the benefit of His love. Any other plan of living rejects this plan of salvation. None can plant themselves firmly upon His love as revealed in the Gospel, except it be in the way of habitual obedience and holy living. Men may entertain some vain confidence in the general love of God in Christ, but it can be no well-grounded hope. The plan of salvation by Christ is a plan of love to men, which, if we heartily embrace it, will lead us to holy living. His commandments cannot be grievous to such, for among them is, "Believe and be saved," "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." And the great command, *Follow me*, is a command to follow Him *into heaven* by the only *way*, which is Christ—by the only *guide*, that of His *Truth*—at the only *door*, which is *Himself*. His salvation is a salvation from sin: and it takes hold of us in its abounding love, only so far as it saves us more and more from sin. The obedience which believers render to Him is not the cause of His continuing to love us, but it is rather the effect of His love. See

commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken

ch. 14: 23, 24. When, therefore, Paul cried out, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" he was fired with zeal in the Master's service, and added, "Shall tribulation or persecution," &c. Rom. 8: 35. As spoken to the Apostles, these words would have the highest force in their responsible office-work, as publishers of Christ's love. ¶ *Even as I.* As though He had said, Take me for an example of obedience and continuance in my Father's love, and so being fruitful of good works, be disciples worthy of me.

11. *These things.* He states the object of such directions as connected with their highest happiness. ¶ *My joy.* Literally—*The joy which is mine*—which is peculiar to me. As we are to enter into *His joy* at last, (Matt. 25: 21,) if we are His, so the joy that springs from His redeeming love to us, is that which we need to possess and retain, and to enjoy in fulfillment, and not to lose. The world's joy we could afford to spare, but not His. "In whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, (in these precious words of His,) we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." This was especially applicable, therefore, to the Apostles, who were to be sustained in their severe trials, and under the discouragements of His absence, by the presence of this, His joy, in their hearts. See parallel passages in ch. 13: 15, 16. "Let us, therefore, learn that we ought to seek in the doctrine of Christ the assurance of salvation, which retains its vigor both in life and in death."—*Calvin.* ¶ *That your joy.* Namely, the joy thus imparted to you—the joy which springs from my love, understood, embraced, and delighted in—which no affliction or persecution can separate you from, and which will help you to triumph in sorrow and in death—this joy of yours will thus be

unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* <sup>a</sup> your joy might be full.

12 This <sup>b</sup> is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater <sup>c</sup> love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

*a* c. 16. 24; 17. 13. *b* c. 13. 34. *c* Ro. 5. 7, 8.

FULL, just so far as you keep my commands in a filial spirit, abiding in my love. And this which was addressed to these Apostles was proved in their case, (1 Pet. 1: 6; 4: 13,) and of Paul, Romans 8.

12. *This is my commandment.* He accordingly proceeds to show what it is that He commands; for in this respect they might greatly mistake. It is no system of legality that He would enjoin upon them. His commands are gracious—not grievous. The sum of the commandment is LOVE. And what He calls “the *new* commandment” which He gives to them both in His word and in His example, is to love one another—which is an evidence of our love to God. Ch. 13: 34. Here also He calls this *His* commandment emphatically. By this, all men would know them to be His disciples. Ch. 13: 34, 35. ¶ *As I have loved you.* Christ’s love to us is to be at once the grand motive and pattern of our love to the brethren. We love Him and keep His commandment to love one another, because He first loved us. 1 John 4: 19. And we love the brethren because they love Him, and are made like to Him. Ch. 13: 14. OBSERVE—John is often called “the Apostle of Love,” because He so prominently keeps this doctrine in view, both in this gospel narrative and in his Epistles. It is related of him that when he had grown too aged to stand and preach, he was carried into the Christian assembly at Ephesus, and was wont to repeat these words, “Little children love one another.” When he was asked why he always reiterated this, he replied, “It is the Lord’s

14 Ye <sup>a</sup> are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you <sup>e</sup> friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

*d* ver. 10. *e* Ja. 2. 23.

commandment, and if it is obeyed, all is well.”

13. Our Lord now sets forth His love in this connexion. He laid down His life for us, and John has elsewhere drawn from this an inference that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 1 John 3: 16. And here, says our Lord, this laying down of one’s life for his friends is the highest example of friendship to be found in the world. He does not here say anything about His greater love of laying down His life for His enemies, (Rom. 5: 6, 8,) as He is here only pressing upon them the duty of earnest self-sacrificing love towards the brethren. We are to do good unto all men, “especially unto them that are of the household of faith.” Gal. 6: 10. “Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us,” &c. Ephes. 5: 2.

14. This that He had just said would suggest the great point of difference between all human love which, at its highest pitch, is confined to *friends*, and His dying love which was shown to enemies. Therefore, He hints of this by saying here, “Not as if I died for you when ye were *friends*, but when ye were *enemies*; and now you have this most powerful motive to be my friends; and *ye are my friends* if ye do whatsoever I command you.” So only could they prove themselves to be His friends. “Our hearts,” says *Calvin*, “must be harder than stone or iron, if they are not softened by the inestimable sweetness of Divine love.”

15. *Henceforth I call you.* Not any longer do I treat you as servants. He here looks forward to the closer, more confidential relation in which they are

16 Ye <sup>a</sup> have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained <sup>b</sup> you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that*

a 1 Jno. 4. 10, 19. b Ep. 2. 10.

your fruit should remain; that whatsoever <sup>c</sup> ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

c ver. 7. c. 14. 13.

to stand to Him henceforth. In these valedictory discourses He opens His whole heart to them more fully than before—takes them to His very bosom—and pours out His soul of love before them. And this is only the beginning of what should more and more take place under the dispensation of the Spirit. ¶ *Servants—slaves.* They had before this been treated more distantly, as ch. 13: 16. “The servant is not greater than his lord.” ¶ *For the servant knoweth not.* This had been their case all along—and, hence, they had to walk *according to orders*, in a most dependent and submissive way, without any full and satisfactory unfolding of His plans. Henceforth, He would treat them more like intimate friends, in this respect—and thus He does already in these discourses. OBSERVE—1. It is a privilege to be His servants. But a higher privilege is it to be treated by Him as friends. 2. While He exhorts us to treat Him as a friend, He engages to treat us as friends. If He had not already first befriended us, we should never have been brought into friendship with Him. ¶ *Friends.* This is His condescending love to us sinners. Abraham, the father of the Faithful, was called by this honorable name, “the friend of God.” And these Apostles, He was now and henceforth to treat with a very special friendship, as they were to be entrusted with His plans, and with a most important commission. ¶ *For all things.* This is the purely confidential and intimate way in which He was to treat them—opening the mysteries of His kingdom, and unfolding the Father’s will and ways, as He received them from His bosom. In a special sense, the secret of the Lord was to be committed to them, and He would show them His covenant. So they afterwards say, “We speak the

wisdom of God—the hidden wisdom,” &c., (1 Cor. 2: 7; 2 Cor. 4: 6,) as “the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.” Titus 3: 4. This friendship would be perfected in Heaven. This refers to what is past as a pledge of what is to come. Ch. 16: 12.

16. *Ye have not chosen me.* As regards this friendship, it originated on His side, not on theirs. Nay, they would have chosen the world and self and sin—anything rather than Him. ¶ *I have chosen you.* This still connects with His laying down His life as the highest possible example of love; and thus delicately does He come to the distinctive feature of His love, that they were naturally estranged, and enemies. 1 John 4: 10, 19. ¶ *And ordained you—constituted—appointed.* Acts 13: 47. Even these Apostles, so conspicuous in His service, He had chosen from the world, (vs. 19,) and further from among all His disciples, had called them and constituted them Apostles. They were fishing and collecting customs, and engaged in their worldly avocations, and He called them to His special service, as they would remember. ¶ *That ye should go.* This may refer to their apostolic commission, “Go YE into all the world and preach the gospel,” or it may mean merely that they should *go on* in an active, living piety, and be fruitful of all good works. ¶ *Fruit.* The Apostles afterwards often spoke of their fruit, or the effects of their ministry. Rom. 1: 13; Col. 1: 6; 1 Thess. 1: 5, 6. Here He encourages them beforehand with the promise of their labor being productive. “The chief accomplishment of this promise, says Calvin, may be at the very time when there is no appearance of fruit.” ¶ *Should remain.* How truly the fruit of their labors remains to this day, and goes

17 These <sup>a</sup> things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 If <sup>b</sup> the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it* hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the

<sup>a</sup> ver. 12. <sup>b</sup> 1 John 3. 1, 3.

on to propagate itself. In their inspired writings—in their evangelical doctrines and institutions, what abiding fruit have they had. So that though persecutors may have seemed to them to peril the very existence of the church, it stands enlarged and established more and more, and shall stand to the end. So said Calvin, “Our preaching is not for a single age only. New fruit will be seen to spring up after our death.” OBSERVE—While He speaks of their fruit, He yet says that their fruit-bearing was of His appointment, and because He constituted them for this end. And Paul himself says, “Neither is he that planteth, *anything*; nor he that watereth, but *God that giveth the increase*.” See 2 John 8; Rev. 14: 13. ¶ *That whatsoever*. 1 Cor. 3: 7. So He had said, (vs. 7,) that the prayers which they should offer in the way of keeping His commandments, should be granted. Here He says that it belongs to the plan of choosing and appointing them, that they should ask and receive—that they should bring forth fruit by means of answered prayer—and that whatever they should ask in the way of such fruit-bearing service should be granted, (see vs. 7 and 8,) because it would be asked in *His name*—on the ground of His work—as representing His interest, and for His glory. This would be to them a great encouragement, in the various trials of their office, and of their private Christian life. OBSERVE—The election of any one to eternal life, includes all the particulars of holy living, even the habitual Christian praying—(asking in Christ’s name,) and the answering of prayer as part of the Christian life.

17. *These things*. If John is “the Apostle of Love,” it is because Christ

world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore <sup>c</sup> the world hateth you.

20 Remember <sup>d</sup> the word that

<sup>c</sup> c. 17. 14. <sup>d</sup> Matt. 10. 24. Lu. 6. 40. c. 13. 16.

is the *Lord of Love*. See vs. 11, 21. Ch. 16: 1, 25, 33; 17: 1; 18: 1, &c. This verse, therefore, points back to vs. 12, and what comes between is rather an enlargement upon the example to be drawn from His love. ¶ *Love one another*. See 1, John 4: 11. “If ministers do not maintain brotherly intercourse,” says Calvin, “they may possibly erect some large heaps, but they will be utterly disjointed and confused, and all the while there will be no building of a church.”

18. From this verse to ch. 16: 4, He forewarns them of the persecutions they should be called to endure from the world. “After having armed them for the battle, He now exhorts them to patience.” They were not to marvel, if the world hated them, considering their treatment of Him, which should be more and more developed unto His death. This last and crowning act of hatred is spoken of as already passed, for it was certain and just at hand, and it would be past so soon, that they would shortly have to contemplate it as a most astounding fact. ¶ *I know*, &c., or *Know ye*. In truth, the world hated Him before it hated them, for it hated Him as soon as He came into the world, (ch. 1: 11,) in His Public Ministry; and before *they* were ever called, *He* had been persecuted. So He had said, ch. 13: 16, “If they have persecuted me,” &c. The term rendered “*before*,” is taken by some to refer to *rank*; and then it would read, “It persecuted me, *your chief*,” and the servant is not greater than his lord. So Calvin, Lardner, &c. Ch. 15: 20. See Gal. 1: 10. But the common reading is better.

20. *Remember the word*—referring to ch. 13: 16. In Matt. 10: 25, He had also uttered a similar warning, “If

I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if <sup>a</sup> they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But <sup>b</sup> all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 If <sup>c</sup> I had not come and spoken

<sup>a</sup> Exe. 3. 7. <sup>b</sup> Matt. 10. 22; 24. 9. c. 16. 3. <sup>c</sup> c. 9. 41.

they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?"

¶ *Persecuted.* He states the principle, that they might expect treatment corresponding with His, whether good or bad, as they were sent to represent His cause on the earth.

21. *All these things*—hating and persecuting. ¶ *For my name's sake.* The Christians in the opening of the second century, were put to death for professing to be Christians, and because they would not renounce the name. Pliny wrote to Trajan, the Emperor, that this was his practice in Bithynia. So Athenagoras pleaded before the heathen magistrates, that the Christians should not be punished for bearing the name, when in other respects they were blameless. Tertullian says in the second century, "Even the name is hated in men perfectly innocent." The disciples were called *Christians*, and Peter says, "If any man suffer as a *Christian*, let him not be ashamed." 1 Pet. 4: 6. James asks, "Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?" Jas. 2: 7. ¶ *Because they know not.* It is in this way they prove their blindness to Divine truth. "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," (1 Cor. 2: 8.) and "they know not what they do." Luke 23: 34. The Jews knew not the Father whom they professed to know, because they knew Him not as sending the Son.

22. This ignorance and blindness of theirs was sinful and without excuse. Wisdom had cried without effect. Prov.

unto them, they had not had sin: but <sup>a</sup> now they have no <sup>1</sup> cloke for their sin.

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works <sup>c</sup> which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

<sup>d</sup> Ja. 4. 17. <sup>1</sup> or, excuse. <sup>c</sup> c. 7. 31.

1: 20-31. He had spoken to them of their sin, as never man spake: and the aggravation of their iniquity was so great, from the fact of their rejecting Him, that comparatively, they would not have had sin but for this. He does not mean to say that there is no sin but unbelief, or that men before Christ came were not sinners—for Christ, as *predicted*, was to be received and believed in, but that this people had incurred the special, dreadful guilt of rejecting Christ, who came to set forth the gospel of Divine love. **OBSERVE**—They who still continue in sin, under the light of the gospel, incur a deeply aggravated condemnation. The worst of the heathen have not this peculiar shade of guilt. See Matt. 9: 32-34; 12: 22-24; John 5. 8-16; 8: 43-59; 9: 13-22; 10: 29-39; 11: 43-53, as instances in which Christ had spoken to them and been rejected. "He that rejecteth me, the words that I have spoken shall judge him." Ch. 12: 48.

23. As Christ was the only Personal manifestation of the Father, hatred to Him was in reality hatred to the Father also—and so the searcher of hearts understood and reckoned it. Ps. 69: 9, compare with Rom. 15: 3. So He had said, "He who honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father." ch. 5: 23. So impossible is it for any to love God and not love His beloved Son, who is the only personal revelation of God to man.

24. *The works.* This continues the summing up of that people's condemnation. His words and His works had been alike rejected. See ch. 12: 37-



25 But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They<sup>a</sup> hated me without a cause.

26 But when the Comforter<sup>b</sup> is

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 35: 19; 69: 4.    <sup>b</sup> e. 14: 17.

41. Christ evidently here holds, that His miracles in themselves were sufficient attestations of His message, and that He and His message should have been received on the basis of such works as could have come from God only. Their proper effect was seen in the case of Nicodemus. Ch. 3: 1, 2. See ch. 10: 37, 38. ¶ *None other man did.* He wrought miracles as no other Person ever did. The Prophets wrought them not in their own name or strength, but in that of God. He wrought them by His word—at a distance, in every variety. ¶ *Seen and hated.* See ch. 12: 45; 14: 9. Christ had manifested Himself and the Father to them. They had seen the Father through the only-begotten Son from the bosom of the Father, who alone could reveal Him. Their condemnation was clear, for they had deliberately and positively, and perseveringly hated them both.

25. In so doing, however, they had shown the truth of God, for they had fulfilled His prophetic word. This was not any unexpected and disappointing result. It had been foreseen and foretold. God's plans would not be defeated by the enmity of sinners. He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of wrath He will restrain. ¶ *That the word.* This did not come to pass just in order to make the prediction good. This was the result and not the object of their conduct. ¶ *Their Law.* The Old Testament scriptures are often called "*the Law*," as in ch. 10: 34. Sometimes the Old Testament is divided into "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms." This prediction is found in the Psalms. See Ps. 35: 19; 69: 4; 109: 3. It is found substantially in these several passages, but chiefly in the two former. ¶ *Without a cause.* This means, with-

out any provocation. The word is rendered "*freely*," without equivalent, in Matt. 10: 8. They did it *freely* from the natural prompting of their hearts, and without any ground. This shows the depth of human depravity. Out of the heart proceed murders and all this natural, free, spontaneous, and constant hatred of God and Christ.

<sup>c</sup> 1 John 5: 6.

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26. While this was the sad case of the people who rejected Him, He would not leave Himself without witness. The only hope for a depraved world is this advent of the Comforter—which could be only—as He elsewhere showed—by the Saviour's departure. Ch. 16: 7. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth, and His testimony should be given to the injustice and wickedness of the world's hatred towards the God-head. The Spirit should come forth from the bosom of the Father, as He did, and should reveal the secret love of His breast, and the wonders of the Divine counsels. 1 Cor. He should witness also of Christ—"taking the things of Christ and showing them unto them." So the coming of the Spirit witnessed in its effects of the exaltation of the Son, as having risen and "shed forth this," which the people at Pentecost saw and heard. See also Acts 8: 29; 10: 19; 11: 12; 13; 2. The Spirit should carry on the testimony of Christ, and on the one hand this seeing and hating must not be expected to cease, while on the other hand the Spirit will never cease to overcome the haters of Christ by His testimony, even to the end. OBSERVE—1. In the economy of grace the Son is said to send the Spirit, in His office of Paraclete and as a substitute for Himself upon the earth—and 2. In the essential nature of the Spirit, He proceedeth from the Father. He is also said to be sent by the

27 And <sup>a</sup> ye also shall bear witness, because <sup>b</sup> ye have been with me from the beginning.

### CHAPTER XVI.

¶ **T**HESE things have I spoken unto you,

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 24. 48. <sup>Ac.</sup> 2. 32; 4. 20, 33. <sup>2 Pe.</sup> 1. 16. <sup>b</sup> 1 Jno. 1. 2.

Father in the name of the Son, as representing the Son, and carrying on His redeeming work upon earth. ch. 14: 26.

27. *Ye also.* The Apostles should bear witness by their inspired records of Christ's Life, which we have in the gospel narratives. This they should do, not independently of the Spirit—but under His prompting, and yet individually, giving each his own testimony. See the four histories. Besides this, they should bear witness to Christ in their life, under the influence of the same Divine Spirit of truth. "First the Holy Ghost will give testimony internally in your hearts, and then outwardly by miracles and through your confession and preaching."—*Luther*. ¶ *From the beginning.* They were raised up for this, to witness of Christ from the beginning of His public ministry to the end. So it is stated when they set apart another Apostle in the stead of Judas. Acts. 1: 21–23. See also Luke 24: 48; Acts 1: 8; 2: 32; 4: 20, 33; 10: 41. So the Apostles claimed to be His witnesses. "And we are witnesses of these things and *so is the Holy Ghost* whom God hath given to them that obey Him." They doubtless often remembered those precious instructions and consolations of their Divine Master, who here so graciously mapped out for them the course they were to follow. This Evangelical narrative of John was itself such a witness, and herein he fulfilled in part this vocation, in times of bitter persecution. See also 1 John 1: 1. His testimony, accompanied by that of the Spirit—nay, which is also that of the Spirit, and which He recognizes and seals as His own—has come even to our day and to us.

that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, <sup>c</sup> that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And <sup>d</sup> these things will they do unto you, because <sup>e</sup> they

<sup>c</sup> Ac. 26. 9–11. <sup>d</sup> c. 15. 21. <sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 8. 1 Ti. 1. 13.

### CHAPTER XVI.

¶ 140. PERSECUTION FORETOLD—FURTHER PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, &c.—*Jerusalem.*

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 16: 1–23. |

Our Lord now more directly forewarns the Apostles of coming persecutions, in His absence, and comforts them with the promise of the Holy Spirit, opening to view more distinctly the work of the Comforter, for them and for all His people.

1. *These things*—referring to what had just been said, especially ch. 15: 18–27. ¶ *Be offended.* The idea involved in the term is, that of meeting with an unexpected hindrance, or stumbling block. Our Lord declares it to be His object to provide them against the troubles that were fast coming on, lest their coming upon such adversities unfortified might prove disastrous.

2. *They shall, &c.* He here refers to that kind of persecution which they should first encounter—that from the Jews—bringing against them all the power of the synagogues, with excommunications, &c. See ch. 9: 22–34; 12: 42. Instances occurred early in their history, (Acts 8: 1; 9: 1; 23: 1,) and the confession of an arch-persecutor, Saul, is put on record from his own lips, that in most severely persecuting them he verily thought that he was doing God service. Acts 26: 9. ¶ *Yea.* Rather, *Yet more, a time cometh for every one to think, &c.* ¶ *Every one.* This showed them that it should not be merely by popular outbreak or fanatic mobs, but by individuals also, coolly calculating that God would thus be served. ¶ *Doeth*

have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, that, when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

*God service.* The term used here is that for the offering of sacrifice, and means that the act of persecution, as "for the sake of God," was regarded as a solemn, religious service rendered to God: and the slaying of the Christians was to them like the slaying of animal sacrifices, as if appointed and accepted by God. "This blindness, however, was not innocent, since the true knowledge of God would have led them to acknowledge the cause of Christ." Ch. 15: 23.

3. This persecution will result from that ignorance of God the Father, and God the Son, which the Jews persisted in, against all His various revelations. So Paul traces the crucifixion of Christ to ignorance of God's revelation on the part of the rulers, "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. 2: 8. See ch. 15: 21-24.

4. Our Lord now repeats the object which He has in view in forewarning them of these coming trials, and of the causes of them. As He had already, in vs. 1, declared, it was to prevent their *stumbling* or being *offended* by the sudden encounter of such adversities. And, moreover, it was to increase their confidence in Him by finding how fully He had foreknown all these reverses and provided against them. See Matt. 24: 25. ¶ *I told you.* This is emphatic—that *I myself* told you. ¶ *And these things.* He refers particularly to this full account of their coming persecutions and oppositions from the world, and of His provisions for them in His absence, which He now gives as never before. While He was yet with them they enjoyed His ready

24\*

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow<sup>a</sup> hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not

<sup>a</sup> ver. 21.

counsel and comfort in every strait. But now as He was to depart, He notifies them of their dangers and resources. He had indeed spoken of the hatred of the world in the general, setting forth the principle, as Matt. 5: 10; 10: 16. Now He speaks more expressly of what was so shortly coming on.

5. But now He says I am going my way to Him that sent me, (as I have given you to understand, ch. 14, in answer to your question, ch. 13: 36,) and none of you asketh me, (or—does none of you ask me,) *whither goest thou?* They were so inquisitive while they seemed to think only of His going to some city for being crowned King, or otherwise; and now that He had opened to them the plan for His departure, (that He was going to the Father, &c.; going *His way*, instead of their way,) they are quite mute on the subject, and are overcome with sorrow on their own account, when they ought rather to be glad.

6. *Sorrow hath filled.* Stier remarks that these are the same disciples who afterwards, when their risen Lord had ascended to Heaven—without any pang at parting with Him—returned with great joy to Jerusalem, believing.

7. *Nevertheless*—though you ask nothing about the nature of my *departure*, I tell you—without your asking—the *truth* of the matter. It is *expedient* for you that I depart. He would show them that His departure, which seemed so dark and grievous to them, was in truth immediately connected with their highest comfort and confirmation. It was *necessary* for *Him* to go, according to the original, eternal plan of Redemp

away, the Comforter will not come unto you : but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

tion. Besides, it was even *expedient*, profitable for *them*, as directly bringing the exhaustless sources of consolation and strength to their souls. ¶ *Go away*. This term means simply *depart*—absent myself. The next term, which is rendered “depart,” signifies *remove to another place*, as to the Father. ¶ *I will send*. He promises thus an adequate substitute—a co-equal Person of the Godhead—who would take His place, and that with the great advantage of being present to their hearts rather than to their eyes. “From this right of mission on the part of the Son, is argued the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, as well as from the Father.” “As one whom His mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted.”

8-11. *When He is come*. The “He” is emphatic, and refers to the coming of this Divine Personage, as a glorious era in the church. The following words set forth His personal work among men—what He will do when He comes. ¶ *Will reprove*. Tyndale’s, Coverdale’s and Cranmer’s translation have it “*rebuke*.” This term describes the direct work of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men. The term “reprove” does not express the full meaning. The verb has rather a double force, including the idea of *convincing* and *convicting*—convincing one class for their conversion—convicting the other class who are not converted, and who shall go on to destruction. The testimony of the Holy Ghost in behalf of Christ, as opposed to the unbelieving world, is essentially a refutation—a demonstration of its wrong and error. 1 Tim. 5: 20; 2 Tim. 4: 2; 3: 16; Titus 1: 9. So the Holy Spirit actually wrought and the Apostles preached “with demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.” ¶ *The world*—meaning in John’s narrative, those who are as yet outside, but who may be brought in—has, of itself, no accurate knowl-

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment :

1 or, convince. Ac. 2, 37.

edge of what sin is, or righteousness or judgment. Only indistinct and imperfect views of these great subjects can they have without the Spirit’s working. The conversion of a sinner has never taken place without the convincing work of the Spirit. This means much more than the work of teaching and convincing by presenting reasons. It is not enough to understand by this work, that “He will so apply the truths of God to men’s own minds, as to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners.” It is only by His inward working that he convinces us—inwardly removing the scales from the eye-sight, quickening the conscience and shedding light upon the soul. The Spirit uses truth for the practical result. His convincing work supposes truth to be in view, and He is “the Spirit of truth.”—We are to interpret this promise of the Spirit’s work, (“when He is come,”) by the actual work of the Spirit, *since He has come*.—I. The preaching of the Apostles, which He so extensively employed after his coming, was mainly upon these three topics, as involved in “Jesus and the Resurrection.” See Acts 2: 22, 23, 27.—1. Christ the only Saviour, and the fatal sin of rejecting Him. 2. Righteousness, or justification, through the finished work of Christ, as witnessed by His Resurrection. 3. The destruction of Satan’s kingdom and the advancement of Christ’s kingdom of grace, and the hastening of His kingdom of glory. II. In every case of *effectual calling*, the Spirit, (1.) convinces of sin and misery, (2.) enlightens the mind in the knowledge of Christ, (3.) renews the will, and thus persuades and enables the sinner to embrace Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel. The threefold working of the Spirit is here set forth. ¶ *Of sin, because*. Unbelief in Christ is here taken to be the root and ground of all sin;

9 Of sin, <sup>a</sup> because they believe not on me;

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 3. 20; 7. 9.

just as believing in Him is the necessary term of salvation, and source of holy living. This is the sin, also, for which there is the least excuse, as it is against the clearest light. So it was then—so it is now. The Spirit's work is to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto men. Those, therefore, who believe not in Christ, set aside all the Spirit's teachings. Hence the dreadful heinousness of this sin will be brought home to all who are effectually called—the Spirit convincing them of their sin and misery, in rejecting Christ, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and so leading them to embrace Him for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel. Those who perish will also be reproved and convicted of their unbelief, as their condemnation. Ch. 3: 19. See 1 John 2: 22; 4: 3. ¶ *Of righteousness.* The work of the Spirit in effectual calling, is not only to convince of sin, but of sin in the form of unbelief,—of sin as committed against Christ, and against the only plan of salvation. This is connected with a kindred work, of *enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ.* Without this, all conviction of sin would be useless, and must end in despair. Therefore, He convinces of *righteousness* as well as of sin. Of righteousness, as found in Christ alone—as well as of sin, as consisting fundamentally in the rejection of Christ. These convincings go together in effectual calling. ¶ *Because I go,* &c. This departure to the Father would need to be understood as connected with the true and only righteousness—for it was by His going to the Father that this righteousness should be proved to be wrought out—finished and accepted. The Spirit would show this in His convincing operation—enlightening their minds in the *knowledge of Christ, and of His finished work.* The unbelieving world, also, will be convicted of Christ's

10 Of righteousness, <sup>b</sup> because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

<sup>b</sup> Is. 42. 21 Ro. 1. 17.

righteousness, as condemning their own self-righteousness. Never was this more forcibly done than in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ—when He to whom Barabbas was preferred, went to the Father, and was thus shown to be the beloved Son of God. Melancthon says, “The Spirit will accuse this very opinion of human reason, which feigns that men are righteous, that is, have remission of sin, on account of creditable actions and virtues of their own.” ¶ *Of judgment.* This is a third point, intimately connected with the others, in this work of the Spirit. The general term here used, includes properly all false judgments of men, as to be tried and condemned by the judgment of Christ, and that judgment or condemnation of the Devil, (the Prince of this world,) is closely connected with our Lord's death, in which He “spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross.” Col. 2: 15. This “convincing of—or concerning judgment, includes the sense of a judgment to come, which the Spirit will produce in men—in some to regulate their actions—in others, to warn them of their condemnation. ¶ *Because.* The judgment of Satan—his condemnation by Christ's triumphant death and resurrection, will be a ground of proof by which the Spirit will show that *all* will be judged, and that the ungodly world will be condemned along with its Prince, or Leader. This judgment also will be progressive, going forward with every advance of the Kingdom of Christ, until the consummation, when Christ Himself shall sit as Final and Universal Judge. Gen. 3: 15; Luke 10: 18; Phil. 2: 10. ¶ *The Prince,* &c. This is He, “the old Serpent,” “the Devil,” “the Prince of the power of the air,” who was predicted to be “cast out” by Christ's work. Ch. 12: 31; Rev. 20: 10. OBSERVE—This

11 Of judgment, <sup>a</sup> because <sup>b</sup> the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but <sup>c</sup> ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit, when he, the Spirit

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 17. 31. <sup>Ro.</sup> 2. 2. <sup>Re.</sup> 20. 12, 13. <sup>b</sup> c. 12. 31.  
<sup>c</sup> He. 5. 12.

threefold work of the Holy Spirit in convincing and convicting men, is carried on under the preaching of the gospel. Men are convinced of sin—its nature, its aggravation, and of sin in reference to Christ. They are made to see the grievous sin of *unbelief*, which they cannot see unless they are enlightened in the knowledge of Christ. So also they are made to see the only true righteousness for sinners, and the false and worthless nature of self-righteousness. They come to see, too, how Christ by His finished work, has brought in an everlasting righteousness for sinners, and is now in heaven, interceding for those who are His—offering his spotless righteousness to the Father, for all his believing people, and that His judgment is coming, when no other righteousness will be admitted for a soul's salvation.

12. *Yet many things.* These things, as is explained in the following words, belong to the truth which the Spirit would more fully reveal after His coming at Pentecost. They could not (were not able to) bear, then, such an unfolding of all the truth as they should afterwards receive. The events of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension would open to them new views, when the Spirit should take those things of Christ and show them unto them. So the Apostles afterwards saw what they could not then have believed—as regards the restoring of the kingdom to Israel, (compare Acts 15: 16, Acts 1: 6,) and their apostolic work—the ingathering of the Gentiles, and the breaking down of the partition walls. Some of these things He revealed to them after His resurrection. Acts 1: 3; Luke 24: 45, 46.

13. *The Spirit of truth.* This title

of truth, is come, he <sup>d</sup> will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he <sup>e</sup> will shew you things to come.

<sup>d</sup> c. 14. 26. <sup>e</sup> Re. 1. 1, 19.

means to ascribe the truth to Him as the Author of revealed truth in the Scriptures, as He who conveys the truth to believers, and as Himself truth itself. ¶ *Will guide you.* The term refers to the office of one who points out the way and leads the traveler—one who acts the part of a guide. ¶ *Into all truth.* Rather—into all *the* truth—namely, of the many things which He had yet to say to them, including the higher doctrines of His Kingdom, and the wider views which were yet to be unfolded by the Spirit. “*Into the full truth.*” See *Here*. This does not warrant us to look for all kinds of truth in the Bible, as though it were given to tell us all science and learning in every department. No truth or science can ever contradict the real teachings of Scripture—for all truth is consistent with itself, and the same God speaks in the book of inspiration and in the book of nature. But the Spirit is here promised to lead into *ALL THE TRUTH*, as it is in Jesus. This was first of all, a promise to the Apostles that they should be inspired for the foundation of the Christian Church, to speak and write what Christ would have to be delivered to men as the gospel of His grace. This had been promised in other terms. Ch. 14: 26. But we cannot inwardly understand the simplest truth of revelation, without this Divine enlightening. Men's arguments or illustrations cannot convince or convert men savingly. And the Spirit is necessary to lead us into all the truth of Christ in our common daily affairs—into Christ's claims, calls, character—and into our glorious Christian hope, as these great truths are more fully set forth by the Spirit through the Apostles. ¶ *Of Himself.* Christ here speaks

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

of the Holy Spirit as like Himself, acting under a commission from the Father, and so discharging a special office, for the extension and consummation of His Kingdom. This same language Christ used of Himself and His own office work. Ch. 12: 49, &c. And as the Spirit was to take of the things of Christ and show them to believers, He is sent from the Father and from the Son. ¶ *Whatsoever He shall hear.* He shall not communicate something absolutely *new*, but shall unfold what was given to them by Christ. See ch. 14: 26. *Luther* says, "There is a holy conference between the Father and the Word, and the Spirit is the hearer." ¶ *Things to come.* The things. Besides showing them things past, which He should bring to their remembrance, He should show them also *the things future*. See Acts 11: 28; 20: 23; 21: 11; 1 Tim. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 3: 1; 2 Pet. 1: 14. This He did especially to the early Church in the Book of the Revelation—where the Holy Spirit revealed to John for the churches, "the things *that shall be hereafter.*" Rev. 1: 1-10.—This would include also immediately the *things to come upon Him*, in the events of His Death and Resurrection, (ch. 18: 4,) which the Spirit should explain to their troubled minds.

14. This was to be the Spirit's work—to honor Christ—to set forth Christ's claims, and to show, both in His revelations to the Apostles and in His work in the heart, the love of Christ to sinners, and the preciousness of Christ as the only Saviour. He sheds abroad in the heart "*the love of God.*" ¶ *Shall receive.* This shows that there were to be no new revelations separate from Christ—no new plan of salvation—as the Spirit's work was to testify of the things of Christ, and not of any new dispensation apart from Christ and His work. He was sent to carry on and complete Christ's work on the earth. He could operate

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

everywhere at the same moment—could be present everywhere at once—and this would be His great advantage. Even Christ's own preaching required the Spirit of Christ to enforce it. OBSERVE—The doctrine of Christ is the central truth of Christianity. ¶ *Of mine*—of what belongs to me—of what pertains to my doctrine and work. See *Epistle to Hebrews, Ephes. and Coloss.* ¶ *Shall show it.* Christ and His gospel cannot be understood except by the Spirit's workings in the heart. And this inward operation is essential to any advance in the divine life or likeness. 2 Cor. 3: 17, 18. It cannot be a mere outward development of the church, or of any independent life of the church as a body, that is here meant. It had already been promised (vss. 9-11,) that the Spirit should convince of *sin*, as against Christ, and of righteousness as the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone—and of judgment as Christ's judgment—when His enemies must be judged and condemned forever with the Prince of this world whom He casts out. All those who have experienced the Spirit's work in their own hearts, have had Christ shown to them—as the only Saviour—as an all-sufficient Saviour—as the very Saviour they need—and as freely offered to them in the Gospel. This the Spirit does in *effectual calling*.

15. The relations of the Holy Trinity are here set forth as the vindication of this statement. The Son reveals the Father by taking our flesh and performing His work on earth. And He is the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father—and thus He is able to reveal Him. This work of the Father's revelation by Christ, the Spirit is to carry on—and especially is He to carry it to the hearts of men by His divine and almighty working. ¶ *Therefore.* This was the ground of my so declaring. The union is so perfect between the Holy Three, that it

16 A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, A little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father.

17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith.

can properly be said that the Spirit's work of revelation is Christ's work of revelation—and that His revealing the Son is His revealing the Father, as they have everything in common. In ch. 17: 10, Christ says to the Father, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." Who but God Himself could say, "All things that the Father hath, are mine?"

16. *A little while, &c.* He proceeded to tell them that this advent of the Comforter would very shortly take place, and, hence, that soon they would not see Him. The terms here rendered "*see*," are different. The former means to see with the eyes—to behold. The latter means to see in a wider sense, including spiritual sight. In a *little while* (a few hours) He should be removed by death and they *should not see Him*. But *again a little while* (a few hours,)—and they *should see Him* with higher views, too, of His person and work—because He was going through death and the grave on His triumphant way to the Father. They should further see Him when He should come to them by the Spirit, and at the final day. ¶ *Because.* He was going to the Father—not to the dominion of death—therefore, they should not be disheartened, but cheered by these consolatory features of the case—that He would send a substitute—and that He was only going home, and would show

19 Now Jesus knew <sup>a</sup> that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A <sup>b</sup> little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye <sup>c</sup> shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A <sup>d</sup> woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her

<sup>a</sup> c. 2, 24, 25.    <sup>b</sup> ver. 16.    <sup>c</sup> 7, 33; 13, 33; 14, 19.  
<sup>c</sup> Lu. 24, 17, 21.    <sup>d</sup> Is. 26, 17.

Himself again, (as at Pentecost,) and would come again and take them to Himself. vs. 20. His death took place in a few hours.

17. *What is this?* The same inquiry is still made among critics, and what wonder that it was a dark question before Christ had died and risen? The words of chief difficulty were these, "*A little while.*"

18. *What He saith.* Rather—*What He is talking about.*

19. *Jesus knew.* It is clearly implied that He knew this by His own Divine insight of the hearts of men, whereby He reads their secret thoughts. ¶ *A little while.* Knowing exactly that this was their point of difficulty, He repeats only this part of what He had said. From this time to His death was about eighteen hours, and from thence to the resurrection about thirty.

20. He was striving to fortify them beforehand for the trial which was to burst upon them in His departure. He would show clearly that He foreknew all the circumstances and events. So now He even foretells them of their sorrow and shock at His removal. But that it would turn out to be matter of rejoicing to them, is the comforting assurance that He gives. ¶ *Ye shall weep.* That is, at my death. Ch. 10: 11; Luke 23: 27. These terms are such as describe funeral wailing. Zech. 12: 10; Mark 16: 10. ¶ *But.* "The



hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And <sup>a</sup> ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again,

<sup>a</sup> ver. 6.

world," as the term is used by John, means the outside world, as unbelieving, but not as reprobate—for many of them should be converted. ¶ *Shall rejoice.* That is, at His death. They should triumph at his crucifixion. ¶ *Be sorrowful.* That is, at His sufferings and death and burial. But here, beforehand, He assures them that they should find the sorrow turned into joy at the resurrection, and would even see *ground for rejoicing* in it all. It is not merely that after the sorrow would come joy—but the sorrow should be turned into joy. They would see, in this very agony and death of Christ, the ground of their only hope as sinners, and of the only hope of the world. Gal. 6: 14. It is also implied that the world's joy shall be turned into sorrow. Their grief also may include that which belongs to the Christian conflict, which should be turned into joy by the advancing work of the Spirit of Christ—so also the grief of the church in Christ's absence should be turned into joy at His second coming.

22. *Will see you.* This should be not merely at His resurrection, but in His coming to them by His Spirit, and in His final coming. ¶ *Shall rejoice.* See Acts 2: 46, 47. It is recorded, (ch. 20: 20,) at His appearing to them after the resurrection, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." ¶ *No man.* The foundation of their joy should be solid and lasting—even the finished work of Christ, and the greatness of His personal love, which they would then see was the same both sides the grave. Hence the doctrine of the Resurrection was a chief topic of the Apostolic preaching, and Christ's resurrection is the great fact at the basis of our religion, and the ground-

and <sup>b</sup> your heart shall rejoice, and your joy <sup>c</sup> no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

<sup>b</sup> Lu. 24. 41, 52 <sup>c</sup> 20. 20. <sup>c</sup> 1 Pe. 1. 8.

work of our hope. "If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead." 1 Cor. 15: 19. See 1 Pet. 1: 8. It is plain from this clause that their permanent joy in the possession of the Spirit, and at the spiritual sight of Christ, is contemplated. The transient bodily sight of Him at the Resurrection, therefore, cannot be all that is referred to.

23. *Ye shall ask.* The term here rendered "*ask*," is not the same as in the next clause. It is the term which Christ generally uses of Himself, in asking the Father—and it refers rather to *making inquiries*. He seems to mean, that in that day of their joy, they will have better understandings of Him, and of His ways, and less need to ask questions, as before—and no opportunity of putting their queries to Him, as a companion in the flesh. Besides this, He would anticipate their doubts and difficulties, by a full revelation, and by the working and indwelling of the Spirit, as the Great Teacher, vs. 30. Yet "*that day*" evidently takes hold on Eternity and Heaven, and only "*a little while*" lies between. ¶ *Whatsoever, &c.* In this clause the term rendered *ask*, refers to *petitions, prayers*. He does not mean, that instead of praying to Him they shall pray to the Father in His name. He means, that they shall not be in the way of *inquiring* of Him as before in the flesh, but that whatsoever they should *pray for*, of the Father, in His name, the Father would grant to them. The idea here is, that after His resurrection, they should see His finished work, as the ground of their acceptance with the Father, and that their prayers would naturally be in His name—for

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask,<sup>a</sup> and ye shall receive, that<sup>b</sup> your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in<sup>1</sup> proverbs: but the time cometh when I shall no more

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 7. 7, 8. Ja. 4. 2, 3. <sup>b</sup> c. 15. 11. <sup>1</sup> or, *parables*.

His sake—which would be a new mode of prayer to them. Ch. 14: 13.

24. *Hitherto*, &c. Before this time they had not understood the great truth that God can be approached only in Christ's name. This belonged to a further stage of His work and of their experience. But when He should be glorified, then they should see the plan of grace and the need of His Mediating work, and intercessions. While He was with them they had probably prayed to Him directly. John in His First Epistle understands this doctrine. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," &c. Ch. 2: 1. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing in His name, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." 1 John 5: 14, 15. ¶ *Ask*, &c. This is spoken in a very different connection from the same language in Matt. 7: 7. The prevalent plea—the name of Christ—is added here. ¶ *That your joy*, &c. This fullness of joy from asking in Christ's name, belongs to the dispensation of the Spirit. Eph. 2: 11. So Peter afterwards saw, "In whom believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." So John also understood afterwards, (1 John 1: 3, 4,) "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." See ch. 17.

25. *In proverbs*. The discourse thus draws to a solemn close. The term here used implies *dark, figurative sayings*, as distinct from "*plainly*." vs.

26 speak unto you in<sup>1</sup> proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

26 At<sup>c</sup> that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you;

<sup>c</sup> ver. 23.

29. This was a form of instruction very common, and much liked among the Jews. He refers to the terms used especially in this discourse. They could not be otherwise than dark and mystical to them as yet, until the Holy Spirit should open to them the meaning as He was promised to do. ¶ *The time cometh*. Literally—The hour cometh or is coming;—that is, the period after His ascension, when He would show them—or the Spirit for Him and from Him would show them. ¶ *Plainly*. The teaching of the Spirit should be without the obscurity of figures or proverbs. Language itself is obscure without the Spirit—as we see that even Christ's words were dark, with all His explanations. But under the Spirit's inward teaching these dark sayings should be plain and well understood. This is *the full truth* which He promised. vs. 13. ¶ *Of the Father*. That is—as revealed in the plan of grace, and as to be approached through Christ, and as carrying on His purposes of redemption by the Son and Spirit.

26. "The more knowledge, the more prayer in the name of Jesus." They should be so enlightened in the work of Christ and the way of salvation, as to be led to draw near to the Father by "the new and living way consecrated for them through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." (Read Paul's understanding of the Father and Christ, as given in his letter to the Hebrews.) ¶ *Will pray*, &c. He does not mean that He will not engage to pray for them—for this is what He does. Ch. 14: 16; Rom. 8: 34; 1 John 2: 1. This is named as the ground of His ability to save to the uttermost, and that "He ever liveth to make interces-

27 For<sup>a</sup> the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that<sup>b</sup> I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His disciples said unto him,

a c. 14. 21, 23. b ver. 30. c. 17. 8.

sion for us." Heb. 9: 24; 7: 25. He means only "I do not (now) say," or "This is not what I am saying." "*To say nothing of my asking the Father, because,*" &c. Their asking in His name shall not cut them off from access to the Father, but it rather ensures their access—since, instead of the Father being alienated from them, He loveth them, &c.—loved them as is proved by their love, and as He said, ch. 14: 21–23, "he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father," &c.

27. *For.* It is not as though the Father needed to be implored in order to care for them—because the *Father Himself*, and of Himself, loves them. ¶ *Because.* He does not mean that the Father loved them on the meritorious ground of their love. He said, "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father," (ch. 14: 21, 23,)—yet "we love Him because He first loved us." His love for us precedes and originates our love to Him; therefore, our love cannot merit His love. 1 John 4: 10, 19. The Father's love brought them to believe and love Christ. And now the Father loved them because they believed and loved Christ—believing in His redeeming work.

28. *I came forth.* This, their belief, He confirms, and sets forth the plain truth, as to His advent and ascension. This means properly not a mere mission from God the Father, but a procession from God—implying His being "*with God*," and being very *God*. Ch. 1: 1; 3: 13, 31; 6: 62; 8: 41.

29. *Plainly.* They seem to mean that now there is not this need of His new arrangement for their understand-

Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no<sup>1</sup> proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

1 or, *parable.*

ing His sayings—that since He had so distinctly spoken, they would not require a new teacher, as promised in vs. 25—that *already* He spake *plainly*. He had before told them that He was going to the Father, in connexion with the words which puzzled them so, vs. 16. They do not yet sufficiently know their ignorance. The hour spoken of for His speaking plainly, (vs. 25,) had not yet come. "So little do they understand," says Augustine, "that they do not even understand that they do not understand."

30. *Are we sure.* Rather—"we know." He had met their difficulty about His words (vs. 16,) without their inquiries—showing that He knew the secrets of their hearts, and had not need to be inquired of. He also felt so much interest in them as to anticipate their doubts and difficulties. This confirmed their faith. Inquirers often pray and wait as though they expected some direct answer to their prayer, not considering that they have the answer beforehand, *in the Scripture*, where Christ has already said what He will do, and has given us the very words on which alone we can have hope. This discovery shows us the divinity of Christ, and of our religion, as it shows the perfect provision He has made for the soul, as none but He who made the soul could do. ¶ *Knowest all things.* So said Peter in the fullness of His heart. Ch. 21: 17. In both cases it was His thorough insight of their very secret souls that so confirmed their faith.

31. *Do ye now believe?* This is not an inquiry, but rather, taken with the

32 Behold, <sup>a</sup> the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own,<sup>1</sup> and shall leave me alone: and yet <sup>b</sup> I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in <sup>c</sup> me ye might

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 26. 31. Mar. 14. 27. 1 or, his own home.  
<sup>b</sup> Is. 50. 7, 9. c 8. 29. c c. 14. 27. Ro. 5. 1. Ep. 2. 14.

next verse, is a caution thrown out as to the strength of their faith. He recognizes their believing, (ch. 17 : 8,) but intimates that it was not so firmly grounded as to abide the coming trial without being shaken. He was preparing some of them for their future work, by strengthening them in the belief of His Person.

32. *The hour cometh.* It was just at hand. It would be but a few hours until His departure, of which He had spoken. ¶ *Scattered.* See Matt. 26 : 31. How sadly true were these words proved to be by the event, when the Shepherd was smitten and the sheep of the flock were scattered abroad. ¶ *To his own.* His own things, possessions and interests—which they had before relinquished for Christ. ¶ *Leave me alone.* How touching! He felt their desertion with all the sensitiveness of the tenderest heart. ¶ *And yet.* He felt the Father's presence and acceptance still more—and their desertion, keenly as He felt it, was nothing in comparison with the momentary hiding of His Father's face.

33. Here closes this remarkable discourse. It was spoken for their good. ¶ *These things*—referring to all the foregoing, from ch. 14. In vs. 1, He had declared that His object in thus discoursing, was to prevent their being offended, by persecutions and afflictions, like the “*stony ground*” hearers, in the parable. Matt. 13 : 21. Now He declares that His further object in these words is that they might have peace in Him. ¶ *Peace.* “For He is our Peace.” Eph. 2 : 14; Micah 5 : 5. See ch. 13 : 19; 14 : 29; 15 : 11; 16 : 1-4. His object in all this precious

have peace. In <sup>d</sup> the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

## CHAPTER XVII.

¶ **T**HESE words spake Jesus, and lifted

<sup>d</sup> c. 15. 19-21. 2 Ti. 3. 12.

discoursing had been to attract their attention and confidence to Himself, as soon to be their Risen Lord. ¶ *In the world.* This He, in all faithfulness forewarns them of—that they should have tribulation in the world—but even this should prove part of the Divine plan for their salvation, as the white-robed company of the redeemed should come to Heaven, “*Out of great tribulation.*” Rev. 7 : 14. And yet *their robes were* “*made white in the blood of the Lamb.*” ¶ *I have overcome.* Already He foresaw His triumph. And faith in Him as our conquering Saviour gets this victory. 1 John 5 : 4. Because He has overcome, we may overcome in Him, and be “conquerors and more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” Augustine says, “Christ would not have overcome the world, if the world could overcome His members.” We are to regard the world as a vanquished enemy. “Greater is He that is in us, than He that is in the world.” 1 John 4 : 4. We are to overcome Satan the accuser by the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 12 : 10, 11.

## CHAPTER XVII.

§ 141. CHRIST'S LAST PRAYER WITH HIS DISCIPLES.—Jerusalem.

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       | 17. 1-26. |

This chapter, says Bengel, is the most easy in respect to its language, and the most profound in respect to its sentiment. It is the Intercessory Prayer of our Great High Priest. He was on earth as a Priest, to offer the one sacrifice of Himself, and to His Priesthood belongs also the great work of Intercession, which He here begins,

up his eyes to heaven, and said Father, the <sup>a</sup> hour is come: glorify

a c. 12. 23; 13. 32.

and which He ever liveth to carry on in heaven, (Heb. 7: 25,) in the true Holy of Holies. See Ps. 141: 2; Rev. 5: 8; 8: 3, 4. John Knox, the Scotch Reformer, when he came to die, asked for the reading of this precious chapter. The devout *Spener* had it read to him *three times* on his death bed, though he never had been willing to preach from it, as it seemed to transcend his powers. Luther says of it, "Plain and artless as is the language, it is so deep, rich and wide, that no one can find its bottom or extent." Augustine remarks, that "our Lord might have offered this prayer in silence or in secret: but He would present Himself to the Father as a praying man, remembering that He was our Teacher—wherefore that prayer which He made for us, He also graciously made known to us, for our edification." So Bengel asks, "Who does not rejoice that these things which Jesus spake with the Father, stand on record still?" The Prayer may be divided into three parts—vss. 1-6, He prays for His glorification with the Father; vss. 6-19, and 24 onward, He prays for His Apostles and disciples, and vss. 20-24, for all who should afterwards believe on Him. Calvin and Bengel both notice this chapter, as the seal of the preceding doctrine, especially from ch. 13: 31, contemplating things past, present and future.

Having taught them in the preceding chapters, discoursing at length upon their relations to Himself, and the promised gift of the Comforter to take His place—having forewarned them also of the world's hatred toward them on account of His name, which the world would continue to hate—He now *adds prayer to the teaching*—thus teaching His ministers, (as Calvin says,) "not to employ themselves only in sowing the word, but by mingling their prayers with it, to implore the assistance of God, that His blessing may render their labor fruit-

thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

ful." Melancthon says, "First He prays for Himself, then for the whole church, and for it He implores the four principal things of the church—the preservation of true doctrine, concord in the church, the application of His sacrifice, and the last and highest good, that the church with Christ may be invested with life, joy and eternal glory."

1. *These things.* Namely, of the preceding discourse. ¶ *Lifted up.* Upward now He tended, soon to go where He eternally belonged. The place was probably the same, namely, the guest chamber. The Publican, smitten with sense of sin, dared not lift up his eyes to heaven—but Christ had no sin, and He prayed here not as a suppliant, but as our Great High Priest, standing between earth and heaven. ¶ *And said.* This prayer is given by John through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as was promised in ch. 14: 26, and it is all of it, doubtless, to be regarded as the prayer of our Lord, without any mixture of the Evangelist's words. Since, however, it is rendered into Greek, from the Syro Chaldaic, the Greek form of it is in the style of John's other narratives. ¶ *Father.* His Father and His people's Father. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father." Ch. 20: 17. ¶ *The hour.* That is, "the hour for the Son of man to be glorified." Ch. 12: 23, 28; 13: 31, 32. The hour of His death, as the hour of His triumph, and as leading to His resurrection and exaltation. This hour had often been referred to as not yet come, (ch. 7: 30; 8: 20,) and now it is spoken of as at length arrived, as before hinted, ch. 12: 23; 13: 1. ¶ *Glorify thy Son.* The Son glorified the Father. Yet there was a mutual glorifying. He prays here in His Mediatorial character, in which He was afterwards exalted according to His prayer, to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins," for the glory of the

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that <sup>a</sup>he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

a c. 5. 27. ver. 24.

Father. Augustine explains it, "Raise Me from the dead, that by Me thou mayest be known to the whole world." See Ephes. 1: 20-23. ¶ *That thy Son.* These words prove the equality of the Son with the Father, as touching His Godhead. What creature could stand before his Creator, and utter such words? There is a mutual glorification of Father and Son, in this manifestation of God to men by Christ. By the Spirit there was to be a further manifestation of God in men, consequent upon Christ's being glorified, and by which the Father and Son and Spirit should be glorified together.

2. *As thou hast.* Inasmuch as, &c. The plea here offered is, that the glorification at the end of His work is appropriate to the preparation and commission at the beginning of it. Glorify Him now even as thou hast already given Him the authority over all flesh for this work. Matt. 28: 18. OBSERVE—He prays for what is already promised and made sure to Him. Ps. 2. Even HE was to ask in order to receive His inheritance. How much more is prayer indispensable in our case. ¶ *Power.* This word means rather, *authority* as "Head over all things to the church" (Ephes. 1: 22,)—having the whole creation put under Him as the second Adam, (Psalm 8,)—and more especially *everything* is given to Him, as the literal reading is, for the express object of His glorifying the Father by gathering in His own people. See Matt. 28: 18, where all power in Heaven and on earth is claimed as given to Him, and on this ground He commissions the Apostles to go everywhere, teaching and baptizing and ingathering. ¶ *As many.* Literally—"that as to *everything* which thou hast given to Him, He may give to them eternal life." So in ch. 6: 37, it reads, "*Everything* that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and *Him*

3 And this <sup>b</sup> is life eternal, that they might know <sup>c</sup> thee the <sup>d</sup> only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom <sup>e</sup> thou hast sent.

b 1 Jno. 5. 11. c Jc. 9. 13. 24. d 1 Th. 1. 9. e c. 10. 36.

that cometh," &c. This is not an accidental mode of expression. The Father, says Bengel, has given the Son *everything*, the totality—all things—that He may gather in His own people as one, vs. 11. He will lose none who are given to Him—and He will lose *nothing* that belongs to any of them, (ch. 10,) not even their bodies. Ch. 6. ¶ *Eternal life.* The gift which He is to bestow is eternal life. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "The Word of life" was He whom the Apostles had heard, seen and handled, and the life was manifested, and we bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. 1 John 1: 2; 5: 11.

3. *This is life eternal—the life eternal—not, this is the way to life eternal, but this is it.* ¶ *That they might know.* The knowledge of God the Father, as set forth in Christ, is life eternal, according to the divine plan—and it surely involves it. This, therefore, is what the Saviour gives by His word and Spirit, viz—this knowledge, the inward apprehension and appreciation of God the Father, and of Christ the Son, as revealed for our love, obedience and salvation. "By His knowledge," said the evangelical prophet—*by the knowledge of Him*—shall my righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Isa. 53: 11. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." 1 John 5: 11. The right knowledge of God through Christ is, therefore, the divine life in us. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5: 12. Ireneus says, "To know God, and to have experience of His graciousness, *is* the very participation of Him, and life results from the participation of God." ¶ *The only true God.* In distinction from the false gods of the heathen, and from any vain divinities of men. Sc

4 I <sup>a</sup> have glorified thee on the earth : I <sup>b</sup> have finished the work which thou gavest me to do

5 And now, O Father, glorify

a c. 14. 13. b c. 19. 30. 2 Ti. 4. 7.

He is called "the only wise God." "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know *Him that is true*, and we are in *Him that is true*, even in His Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God and eternal life*. Little children keep yourselves from idols." 1 John 5: 20, 21; Rev. 5: 7; 1 Thess. 1: 9. It is the conscious acquaintance with God Himself as one, and with Jesus as the manifestation of God in the flesh. Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1: 3. ¶ *And Jesus Christ*. The knowledge of both Father and Son is defined here to be eternal life, and this proves the essential oneness of Father and Son in the Godhead. How could the knowledge of *God and a creature* be eternal life; or how could they be so connected? Our Lord here, in speaking of Himself, uses the name by which He was known, that prophetic name *Jesus*, divinely given Him as the Saviour of men, accompanied with the official title, *Christ*—thus solemnly recognizing these titles as embodying the treasures of that knowledge of which He here speaks—and giving a sweet sanction to this double title for the Church in all time. ¶ *Whom thou hast sent*. So Christ is to be acknowledged as having come from God. The Father cannot be truly known or worshiped except as having sent the Son, vs. 8, (ch. 5: 23,) nor can there be any true, saving knowledge of God, except as Him in Christ. See vs. 22.

4. *I have glorified thee*. That is, as is immediately added, by *finishing the work* given Him to do. His teaching, His holy living, His constant battling with the powers of darkness, His wonder working, and His laying the foundations of the church, and especially the finishing of His work so soon upon the cross—this was His meat and drink (ch. 4: 34; 5: 36)—and all this work

25\*

thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I <sup>c</sup> had with thee before the world was.

6 I <sup>d</sup> have manifested thy name

c c. 1. 1, 2. Ph. 2. 6. He. 1. 3, 10. d Ps. 22. 22. ver. 26.

had been done to the glory of the Father, according to the eternal covenant. And now, having performed His part on earth—including what was immediately to come as the closing act—He asks to be glorified on high with the Father, according to the eternal plan. ¶ *Have finished*. "How doth He say (says Polycarp, a disciple of John,) that He hath finished the work of man's salvation since He hath not yet climbed the standard of the cross? Nay, but by the determination of His will, whereby He had resolved to endure every article of His mysterious passion, He may truly proclaim that He hath finished the work." So Paul, in his old age and in prospect of death, says, "I have fought the good fight—I have finished my course." Our Lord was now within some seventeen hours of His death, when He cried, "*It is finished*." Our blessed Saviour, as the surety of the better covenant, gives us to rest upon His finished work.

5. *Glorify thou me*. He here declares His essential Godhead, when He says, 1. That He had this glory with the Father before the world was; 2. That He had left it only for a time and purpose, and 3. That He ought to return whither He belonged, and whence He came. Compare ch. 1: 1, 2; 6: 62; 8: 58; Col. 1: 17; 1 John 1: 1, 2. See what is said of "Wisdom," Prov. 8: 22, 23. And this personal *Word*—the same Being as that personal *Wisdom*—pleads now to be received back to His original estate. Theophylact explains, "Bring my human nature into a participation of the glory which I, the Word, had with Thee before the beginning of the world." ¶ *With thine own self*, ch. 1. 1. *At the right hand of the Father*—where Stephen saw Him standing, (Acts 7: 56)—and in participation of the throne and kingdom—"made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7: 26. ¶ *The glory which I had*.

unto the men which thou <sup>a</sup> gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and they have kept <sup>b</sup> thy word.

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 8. 30. ver. 2, 9, 11.

<sup>b</sup> He. 3. 6.

"This teaches plainly," says Calvin, "that He is no recent one, nor newly contrived, for if His glory was eternal, so also was He. Besides a plain distinction is here drawn between the Person of the Father and that of the Son; from which we see that He is not only the Eternal God, but that He is also the Eternal Word of God, begotten by the Father before all ages." This prayer was answered, for "God also hath highly exalted Him." Phil. 2: 6-9. The Apostles testified that He was "Exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." Acts 5: 31. OBSERVE—1. There is shown here, also, the oneness of Christ's person, in His three estates, "before the world was"—*on earth* and *afterward in Heaven*. 2. This glory of Christ He did not receive, but *possessed*. He *HAD* it originally, and always—and never began to have it.

6. *I have manifested.* As the Revealer of the Godhead, (ch. 1: 18,) "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person." Heb. 1: 2, 3. "The Life was manifested." 1 John 1: 2. ¶ *Thy name.* He came from the bosom of the Father, to declare and reveal Him—to set Him forth to men for a true *knowledge* of the only true God. vs. 3. This was the name whereby the prophet said He should be called "Jehovah our Righteousness." Jer. 23: 6. The *name* of God which Jesus manifested or made manifest to men, as it could not otherwise have been, was all that by which He maketh Himself known—His titles, attributes, ordinances, words and works. ¶ *Unto the men.* These are they for whom He goes on to pray—the disciples as well as the twelve—all to whom He had especially revealed the Divine name. Though He preached to many unbelievers, His more special work was for the believing people, whom the Father had given Him in the covenant of Redemption.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them

See vs. 2. The good shepherd was to gather the sheep. ¶ *Thine they were,* &c. They were the Father's in the same sense in which they were *given* to the Son. In the covenant of Redemption, the Father is spoken of as *giving* the Son those whom He has chosen from all eternity; so that they are said to have been the Father's *first*—as it is the Father who covenants with the Son for the salvation of all who shall believe. Hence it is said, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." So that this covenanting to save them does not dispense with their coming to Christ, but rather secures their coming. So also it is here added, "*And they have kept thy word.*" This is the saving indication in them. This proves them to be the chosen of God. Christ had spoken of having Himself chosen them out of the world. Ch. 15: 19; 13: 18; 15: 16. This He had done as one with the Father. Here He speaks of the distinct offices and relations of Father and Son. Here our Lord reports to the Father that thus far, these who were given to Him, have been carried forward. They have been called effectually, and have embraced the gospel, and have entered upon a life of obedience. See vs. 7. How remarkable a testimony is this to come from the lips of Christ! How He identifies Himself with His disciples—and prosecutes their cause till they attain to Heaven.

7. *They have known.* They have a knowledge derived from experience. They have that knowledge which is promised to those who follow on to know the Lord. His disciples—especially the Apostles—knew that what Christ offered was from Heaven. They had no doubt of the Divine source of these benefits which He proclaimed. So said Paul afterwards, though not of this present number, "I know whom I have believed." "We know



the words \* which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came

a c. 6. 68; 14. 10.

that we have a building of God." And John in his Epistles declares their most assured knowledge of the truth in Christ, (1 John 1,) and that they knew God in Christ as the substance of the gospel. So Peter said triumphantly, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables." They knew that these things of Christ were from God, and of no inferior origin.

8. *For.* Christ had delivered to them the very doctrines and revelations directed by the Father. In this respect He was the true prophet, of whom it was predicted, "He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him." Deut. 18: 18, 19. So they confess, (ch. 6: 69,) "And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." ¶ *Which thou gavest me.* As He had before said to them, (ch. 14: 24,) "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." See ch. 7: 16, 17; 8: 28; 12 49; 14: 10; 5: 19, 30. ¶ *Have received them.* By faith. They had embraced His doctrine as Divine. Thus they had "*received Him*"—the messenger and the message—and thus He ranked them as "the sons of God." Ch. 1: 12. Their reception of the truth came from His manifestation of it to them, (vs. 6,) and their reception of it was cordial, leading to obedience. ¶ *Have known surely.* Such positive convictions belonged to their reception of the truth. It was not only their *certain* knowledge but their knowledge of *a certainty*. They regarded Him as He claimed to be, in the very particular in which the world rejected Him—namely, His coming from the Father as God, and His Mission as Mediator.

9. *I pray for them.* Here our Lord begins to fulfill His promise. Matt. 10: 32. Up to this point He had claimed His own glory with the Father, as having performed thus far His part in the Covenant of Redemption. He has

out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not

just presented the case of His people, as called, taught and trained thus far, and now He prays for them as to the future. This He does, not as a suppliant, but as a claimant. The term used expresses this distinction. It is not the term to *pray as a suppliant*, but to *ask as a friend*, and face to face. He asks as the Great Shepherd, Jehovah's fellow—the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and He asks for His flock. Literally, it reads, "I ask *concerning* them." They are the subject of my intercession. ¶ *Not for the world.* This is His intercessory plea for His own people, and does not embrace others, because He is here on the eve of departure from His own Apostles and disciples, and He pleads, of course, for them as He does not for others. His prayer is such as would be heard on their behalf. These are a distinct class, and it is not a general petition referring to none in particular, else it it had been of small value to us—but it is for all who are His believing people. It is not meant that He never could or would pray or ask anything for the world as distinct from His people; for He does ask for the world's daily preservation from the doom that all have deserved, so that the gospel may be preached to sinners, even to such as will finally reject it, and be lost. The words here might be rendered, "*I am praying for them—I am not praying for the world.*" OBSERVE—"The Lord knoweth them that are His," and this is the inscription on the seal of His foundation. 2 Tim. 2: 19. ¶ *For they are thine.* This is declared to be the ground of His plea for them, that they are the *Father's* as well as His. In vs. 6, He had said, "*Thine they were,*" before giving them to Christ, in the covenant of Redemption. Here it is said, *Thine they are*, even after they are given to Christ. It is not as though the Father hated them, or had no interest in them—for the love

for the world, <sup>a</sup> but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all <sup>b</sup> mine are thine, and

a 1 Jno. 5. 19. b c. 16. 15.

originated in the Father's bosom, who "so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son." Yet many regard the Father as though He were hostile to their salvation, and *hard to be won* by their prayers, or even by the entreaties of Christ. "In that prayer for Eternal Life, (says Bishop Hooker,) which our Saviour knew could not be made without effect, He excepteth them for whom He knew His sufferings would be frustrate, and commendeth unto God His own. They are the blessed of God, for whom He ordained His kingdom, (Matt. 25: 34,) and to whose charge nothing can be laid. Rom. 8: 33."

10. *And all mine.* This is in the *neuter*—*all my things*—comprehending things as well as *persons*. So in vs. 2, Christ as Mediator, derives all His instructions and all His people from the Father. His people come from the Father as a gift to Him in the covenant, and to the Father they are reported as brought in, &c.. according to the terms of that eternal compact. ¶ *Thine are mine.* How could any creature say this? What larger claim to Godhead could be made? It is not "all thy people" merely, but *all things that are thine* are mine, including, of course, the Godhead. But here the special reference is to His people, and all things necessary to their salvation, and therefore all things in order to their salvation. For in order to bring about the salvation of His people, it was necessary that He be "Head over all things." Eph. 1: 22. He had already said, (ch. 16: 15,) "all things that the Father hath are mine." "These things are spoken to confirm our faith. We must not seek salvation anywhere else than in Christ."—*Calvin*. "Do not suppose that they are any the less the Father's, because they are His, or any the less His because they are the Father's."—*Chrysostom*. ¶ *Glorified.* In

thine are mine; and I <sup>c</sup> am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the

c Ga. 1. 24. 1 Pe. 2. 9.

their redemption He would get glory to His name. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. 1: 10. How comtorting that Christ finds any motive for our salvation, in His own glory! Knox, the great Scotch Reformer, triumphed in death, upon this truth as expressed in Ezekiel, (Eze. 36: 22,) "I do it for mine own name's sake." "This is a most excellent testimony for confirming our faith, that Christ will never cease to care for our salvation, since He is glorified in us."—*Calvin*. Christ is glorified in His saints by their life, (1 Cor. 10: 21,) by their death, (ch. 21: 19,) by their "manifestations" in the last day, (Rom. 8: 19,) as "the Sons of God."

11. *No more.* "I am about to be no longer in the world." This was the immediate occasion of His interceding here for them, as He was so soon to leave them—and they who heard this intercessory prayer, could never doubt of His pleading for them continually, on high. Neither should we doubt it who read the same. ¶ *These are.* This is the occasion of His petition. His people would be in the world compassed about by enemies and by infirmities while He would be absent with the Father. Therefore, He implorcs the guardian care of the Father on their behalf. And as He so prays here on earth, we are given to see how He will make this the burden of His prayer in Heaven, at the Father's right hand. Here we get a glimpse within the veil. ¶ *Holy Father.* This word Holy, as applied to the Father here, points to the fidelity of the Father in the covenant. The Son had stipulated to redeem those given Him by the Father—and the Father, as true to the covenant, would surely *keep* them by all the guards and defences of His throne. So believers are said by Peter

world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep <sup>a</sup> through thine own name <sup>b</sup> those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

12 While I was with them in the

a 1 Pe. 1. 5. Jude 1. 24. b Pr. 18. 19.

to be "KEPT (defended as by a garrison,) by the power of God through faith unto salvation" for the inheritance which is reserved in Heaven for them. 1 Pet. 1: 5. Christ calls the Father "*Righteous*," in vs. 25. ¶ *Through thine own name*. Rather—in *thy name*. That is, in the confession of thy covenant name, "Jehovah our righteousness." Keep them in the knowledge and acknowledgment of thy covenant titles and truths. ¶ *Those*. Many corrected editions read here, "*which*"—referring to *name*. "In thy name *which* thou hast given me." See Jude 21. Christ was to "be called Jehovah our righteousness." See Is. 9: 6; Jer. 23: 6. ¶ *One as we are*. That is—that they may be one by the indwelling of the divine Spirit—not merely one in will and purpose, but one in "the divine nature," (2 Pet. 1: 4,) through "the exceeding great and precious promises"—and in this respect made like to God. "Then will our unity be truly happy when it shall bear the image of God the Father, and of Christ, as the wax takes the form of the seal which is impressed upon it."—*Calvin*.

12. *While I was*. The Lord Jesus here speaks as though He was already standing at the right hand, and no longer on earth. Pleading as High Priest, He seems to rise to the Holy of Holies—and this He does to give us an idea of His loving pleas for us which He would continue to make on high. ¶ *I kept them*. He is here reporting Himself as Mediator, and showing how He had fulfilled His commission. While He pleads with the Father to keep them henceforth, He here says that He had kept them hitherto. He had exercised His official care over them, and preserved them according to the covenant—suffering for them—and ready to die now on their behalf, and it is

world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture <sup>c</sup> might be fulfilled.

c Ps. 109. 8. Ac. 1. 20.

every way fit, therefore, that He should commit them to the Father's care, as beloved also by Him. OBSERVE—If we compare His keeping of His own and His Father's keeping of them, we see that both Father and Son must be God—that they must be of equal power and dignity. ¶ *In thy name*. In the knowledge and acknowledgment of thy covenant name, and of thy truth and salvation. ¶ *I have kept*. Literally—I have *guarded*—or *kept as with a military guard*—a stronger word than the simple word "*kept*," which precedes. ¶ *None of them is lost*. He reports to the Father this success of His mediatorial work on earth—that of those given Him by the Father, He has lost none. That He does not mean by these words to make Judas an exception, as if this one was given Him by the Father and had been lost, is plain from the reference to this very passage in ch. 18: 9. "Of them which thou gavest me, *have I lost none*." The proper reading here is, "*None of them is lost*. But the son of perdition is lost." The words rendered "*except*," are elsewhere used to signify "*but*,"—*but only*—not inferring that Judas was given Him by the Father, but the contrary. And that God's plan was in no way frustrated by the fall of Judas is also plain from the title here given to him—"the son of perdition"—meaning according to the Hebrew idiom—one devoted to perdition—or having in himself that quality in an eminent degree, as "the man of sin," is also so called. Besides, this fall of Judas is expressly said to have been in fulfillment of prophecy, and, therefore, altogether foreknown by God, and provided for from the beginning. Ps. 109: 8. So in ch. 13: 18, our Lord expressly says, "I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled," &c.

13 And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word ; and <sup>a</sup> the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even I as am not of the world.

a c. 15. 18, 19.

It was no falling from grace, because he had no grace to fall from, for none is able to pluck His sheep out of His hands. Ch. 10. ¶ *That the Scripture.* Of course, it is not meant that Judas fell just in order to fulfill the Scripture. But when He fell, it was seen to be in exact fulfillment of the prediction long before uttered. If God did not know the end from the beginning, how could He save any? If His plan could be frustrated in the case of any, why not in the case of all? How comforting to know that He will lose none of His own believing people—that none shall pluck them out of His hand—nor is *any able* to pluck them out of His Father's hand. Ch. 10. 28, 29.

13. *And now.* He speaks of His departure as just at hand, and this makes the urgency of His prayer. ¶ *That they might have my joy.* He gives this as the reason why He speaks these things in the world—just as in ch. 15: 11, He had given the same as a reason for His speaking those things to them. Hence we find that His promises and cheering exhortations, in ch. 15, had for their aim the completing of His disciples' joy. And here these gracious words of intercession are offered up, and spoken in their hearing for this same end. OBSERVE—It is not enough for Christ that His people be perfectly safe for eternity. He will have them also perfectly happy. See ch. 16: 24; 1 John 1: 4—“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” His object was that they might have complete, or fulfilled in them, the joy which is *peculiarly His*—which He receives as Mediator, in view of His finished work,

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but <sup>b</sup> that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify <sup>c</sup> them through thy truth : thy <sup>d</sup> word is truth.

b Gn. 1. 4.  
d Ps. 119. 151.

c Ac. 15. 9. Ep. 5. 26. 2 Th. 2. 13

and which they shall share, as they enter more and more into the full benefits of His work. See ch. 15: 11; compare Is. 53: 10, 11–14. He had kept them under guard (vs. 12) in this way, by giving them His word. The motive, therefore, of the prayer for the protection is, that they bear the same principle within them as our Lord Himself—a principle conflicting with the world, and rebuking it, (ch. 3: 20; 7: 7,) and therefore they cannot escape persecution.

15. The request is not for their removal from the world, because they have yet a work to do on earth, and a work is to be done for them, and in them here below. Luther understands it—“They are not to depart from the world with me, for I have more work for them to do: to wit, that they increase my little host.” ¶ *The evil.* Some read from *the evil one*. The words may be so read. They are the same as in the Lord's Prayer. Matt. 6: 13. See 1 John 5: 19; 2 Tim. 4: 18; “*from every evil work.*” We are not to seek our removal from the earth before the time—nor to retire from active part in the affairs of this life—but we are to labor in our business here, seeking only to be preserved from the evil, and to grow in grace. How encouraging that the divine love is concerned for this very thing.

17. It is not only to be kept from positive evil, but to be advanced in the divine life that our Lord asks for His people. It is part of His gracious plan. He had given them the divine word, as witnesses and depositories of the truth, (vs. 8,) and through its reception and possession He asks that

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And <sup>a</sup> for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 2, 30.

holiness may be wrought in them.

¶ *Sanctify them.* This term has the Old Testament sense of *setting apart to a sacred service*, (vs. 19,) and the New Testament sense of *spiritual purification*. Here it includes both. Their official consecration comprehends or implies sanctification. It refers not mainly, however, to setting them apart to the ministry, but it refers especially to the inward work of sanctification to be carried on by the Spirit applying the word. ¶ *Through thy truth.* By thy truth applied under the ministration of the Spirit. Through this word they were said to be already clean, (ch. 15: 3,) but needed *that daily habitual feet washing* which should more and more cleanse them from defilements of the world. vs. 15. ¶ *Thy word is truth.* See ch. 18: 37, 38; Acts 20: 32. The revealed word of God is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him: and "the Word of Truth" is the name given to "the Gospel of our Salvation," (Eph. 1: 13; Col. 1: 5,) as it is the embodiment of saving truth, and the revelation of Him who is "the Truth." Whatever contradicts this divine word is falsehood.

18. They need this sanctification on account of their high vocation and holy mission. They are commissioned to a work requiring personal holiness. They are *sent*, (*Apostle* means one *sent*,) as He was *sent*, "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." Heb. 3: 1.

19. *I sanctify myself.* This, as applied to Christ, cannot refer to spiritual sanctification, but has necessarily the Old Testament sense of holy *self-consecration* to His sacrificial death. He spoke of Himself as sanctified, (set apart,) by the Father, and sent into the world. Ch. 10: 36. So in Heb. 10: 29. Christ is said to have been

be <sup>1</sup> sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; <sup>b</sup>

<sup>1</sup> or, truly sanctified. <sup>b</sup> Ro. 12. 5.

"*sanctified* (set apart) by the blood of the covenant." He consecrated Himself to a sacrificial death for the sake of His people, enduring the penalty as a substitute for them. This of course implies personal Holiness as necessary to His character and work, as sacrifice, Apostle, and High Priest, &c. See Heb. 9: 14; 7: 26, 27. ¶ *That they also.* The object which He had in view by His holy consecration, was that they *also* might be set apart to God's service with a holy consecration. ¶ *Through the truth.* Rather—*In truth*, considered in its highest and fullest manifestation, vs. 17. The doctrine of Christ's vicarious sacrifice as a spotless offering, is here recognized as that sanctifying truth which of all others would be most powerful. "Be ye holy for I am holy." "For such an High Priest became us, (Heb. 7: 26,) who is holy, harmless, undefiled," &c. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one." Heb. 2: 11. And the consistency of this sacrificial provision with eternal truth, is an important sanctifying element.

20. Neither do I pray (or make request) concerning these alone. There were other sheep not of this fold, whom He must bring. Ch. 10: 16. See ch. 11: 52. The Apostles believed through Christ's word. Others after His departure should believe on Him through their word—the same Divine word delivered by them, leading men to believe in the same Saviour. Rom. 10: 16, 17. "Wo to the Papists," says Calvin, "who are not ashamed to belch forth the abominable blasphemy, that the scripture contains nothing that is not ambiguous, and that consequently the tradition of the church is sole mistress of what they are to believe. But we should remember that the Son of God, our only Judge, approves of that

as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And <sup>a</sup> the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in

a 2 Cor. 3. 18.

faith alone, which is received from the teaching of the Apostles."

21. This was the substance of what He asked concerning all these, whether present or future believers—that they should be one, as becomes one flock under one shepherd—having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." &c. ¶ *As thou.* So in vs. 11, that they may be one *as we are*—"in the unity of the same Spirit"—for he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. ¶ *One in us.* It is only by having fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, that they could be one. It is only as standing in the same Saviour, and bearing the same image of Christ, and having the same spirit of adoption, to put forth the same cry of Father, that they could be *one*. How much is here signified as to the only proper means of Christian unity—that it is not in *uniformity* but in true spiritual piety. This unity may consist with a variety of *form*, but it cannot consist with diversity of spirit. "*Union, (says Jay,) implies parts.*" Only the different parts, like different members of the body, should move harmoniously under one and the same Spirit of truth and love. ¶ *That the world.* A further object in this petition of our Lord, is the convincing power that such Christian unity must have for the world of beholders, leading others all along to believe. This was the effect in primitive times and since. *History Waldenses.* Ps. 133. See ch. 13: 35, *Notes.* This belief in the Mission of Christ, implies a belief in His whole work and office.

one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be <sup>b</sup> with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

b 1 Th. 4. 17.

22. *The glory.* He had made them to be sharers in His glory, as partakers of the Divine nature, and of His fullness of grace and truth. Ch. 1: 14. Believers stand in His merit, and are made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, (Eph. 2: 6,) and all the glory that He is entitled to as Head, He gives to be shared by the members so far as each can receive it, and show it forth. This glory is already given, in order to their unity in the brotherhood, that it may be even like that in the Godhead, which is a unity of essence, consistent with a diversity of form.

23. These close relations of Father and Son are made to bear upon the unity of the Christian membership. The stalk and root of the Vine are one, so as that the branches should be one also, by having all of them a vital relation to the Vine, and deriving of its one life. ¶ *Perfect in one.* "Consummated in one—brought to perfect unity."—*Ben-gel.* The church is to progress toward the perfection of a spiritual unity, which shall be manifest to the world. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith," &c. Eph. 4: 13, 15. ¶ *And hast loved them.* Such distinctive Christian unity is a clear proof to the world, not only of Christ's Divine Mission, but of the Divine love toward them. As we love Him, so also we love one another, *because He first loved us.*

24. Here this wonderful intercessory petition branches into a claim for the transfer to heaven of His people, ¶ *I will.* This is the language of claim founded on right, as equal with the

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou

Father, and on the merit of His atonement. When the Christian dies, we may regard it as being at this expressed "I will" of Christ, where the object is so tender loving and gracious—that they may behold His glory by an immediate presence with Him where He is. Here on earth the Christian sees through a glass darkly, and knows only in part—is encompassed with darkness and doubts, from not clearly beholding His glory. Therefore He claims that they shall have death to do them the service of introducing them to the beatific vision of their Lord. 2 Cor. 3: 18; 1 Cor. 13: 12; 1 John 3: 2. ¶ *Behold*—as in 1 John 3: 2, the open beholding of His glory, in connexion with which we shall be changed into His perfect image. Luther says, "We should make this sentence our pillow, and a oed of down for our souls, and with a glad heart repair to it when the happy hour draws nigh." This sight includes a partaking. We are to "*enter into the joy*" of our Lord. No mere spectator could see this glory. See Rom. 8: 17; 2 Cor. 3: 18. ¶ *For thou lovedst*. The eternal love of the Father to the Son will be displayed as at once the source of all the heavenly glory and the spring of all their blessedness in Him.

25. There seems an appeal here to the Father as righteous in reference to the unbelieving world, while it was their blame and shame that they had not known Him, and His boundless love. He (the Son,) had known Him, "and these," the opposite class of men, believers in Him, had known His Person and office work, as sent by the Father.

26. *I have declared*. He now closes by declaring how He had instructed

hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

¶ **W**HEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with

them in the character and will of God, by personal manifestation, by direct and constant teaching, and by the influences of the Spirit, in a measure, and how He will still continue to make known to them the same great truths of God, in order that the Father's Love, as shown toward Him might be "*shed abroad*" in them, and that Christ Himself might abide in them as the living vine abides with all its roots and fatness in the branches. ¶ *Will declare it*. This implies that He would continue this work of revealing the Father, by the mission of the Comforter, and that all these unfoldings of the Divine character, in all ages of the church, ("the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto them,") should work in them a "hope that maketh not ashamed,"—"Christ in them, the hope of glory." Rom. 5: 5; Col. 1: 27.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

§ 142. DEPARTURE TO GETHSEMANE.—  
*Mt of Olives*.

Evening introducing the sixth day of the week.

|               |                |           |        |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| Matt.         | Mark.          | Luke.     | John.  |
| 26: 30, 36-46 | 14: 26, 32-42. | 22: 39-46 | 18: 1. |

The Evangelist now proceeds to record the history of our Lord's betrayal and seizure in Gethsemane. He omits altogether the narrative of His agony in the garden which is given by the other Evangelists. See *Harmony, Matthew*. He touches lightly upon what they have narrated, and gives some circumstances omitted by them, seeming to write in view of their history as already known. ¶ *Went forth*. Out of the gate. ¶ *The brook Kedron*. The other Evangelists say "*to the Mt. of Olives*." John alone names this brook in this connexion. The path

his disciples over the brook Cedron,<sup>a</sup> where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

¶ 2 And Judas also,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sa. 15. 23.

that winds down the hill from the gate, now called St. Stephen's, out of which Jesus "*went forth*," near the temple, crosses this stream near the garden of Gethsemane, and passes up the Mt. of Olives. We found a small bridge laid over the dry bed of the rivulet a few feet in length, along the line of this path, "*the prophet's bridge*." The deep ravine of Jehoshaphat, on this (the East) side of the city, separates the Temple summit from Mt. Olivet. The enclosure which is now pointed out as Gethsemane, and which contains the large and ancient olive trees, lies at the foot of Mt. Olivet, as it begins to slope from the edge of the brook. Other olives, of more recent growth, are scattered along the hillside, and the footpath, which is probably ancient, winds from the bridge along the site of the garden, over the hill to Bethany. We traversed it with deepest emotion, to and fro, taking views of the city from it, near the summit, where we may suppose our Lord to have *wept over Jerusalem*, and remembering at every step the sacred and touching associations. The term here rendered *brook*, is compounded of two words, meaning a *water-stream*, and refers to a winter stream, that is dry in summer. The name *Kedron*, as here found, means "*of the cedars*," though the Hebrew name from which it is taken may signify *black*, and thus, a *black stream* would refer to the dark waters of it, or to the dark narrow ravine through which it flowed. It is more commonly called *Kidron*. John is the only one who mentions it in this narrative. See the Old Testament mention of it. 2 Sam. 15: 23; 1 Kings 15: 13; 2 Kings 23: 6, 12; 2 Chron. 15: 16; 20: 14. ¶ *A garden*. The other Evangelists say, "*to the place called Gethsemane*." John tells us that it was a garden plot. Likely enough, from the location, it

which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas<sup>b</sup> then, having received a band *of men*, and officers from

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 26. 47, &c. Mar. 14. 43, &c. Lu. 22. 47, &c.

was the retired edge of a farm. Joseph of Arimathea had a tomb in a garden outside of the gate, and some have thought that Gethsemane may have been a plot belonging to the grounds of some one of His disciples. It appears from the next verse that Jesus was in the habit of resorting thither. The present site was probably fixed upon by the Empress Helena, A. D. 326, when she located so many places of sacred interest in the Holy Land. This garden is now enclosed by a heavy stone wall, twelve feet high, built in 1850 by the Latin monks. Finding one day some of them at work inside, we obtained entrance. All the natural features of the ground are destroyed except the eight old olive trees, the monks having removed the grass and shrubbery, to lay it out artificially as a flower garden. A terrace is thrown up in the centre about two feet high, with rose bushes planted around.

§ 143. JESUS BETRAYED AND MADE PRISONER.—*Mt. of Olives*.

Evening introducing the sixth day of the week.

|           |           |           |          |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.    |
| 26.47-56. | 14.43-52. | 22.47-53. | 18.2-12. |

2. *Judas*, &c. John passes by the agony of our Saviour in the garden, of which he must have been witness, and which we may suppose he would have here detailed had it not been accurately and sufficiently given by the other Evangelists. He alone states the fact that Judas was familiar with the place, as he had often accompanied our Lord in His retirement there. Often Jesus had sought this retreat from the bustle and persecution of the city. The wretch who could plot to betray our Lord could take a guilty advantage of such sacred privacy. ¶ *Often*. See ch. 8: 1; Luke 21: 37.

3. *A band*. Properly—the *band*—that is—which was then on duty—a



the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus, therefore, knowing <sup>a</sup> all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of <sup>b</sup> Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them,  
a c. 10. 17, 18. Ac. 2. 28. b Matt. 2. 23. c. 19. 19.

Roman cohort, or detachment of it, which was stationed in the castle of Antonia, and attended the Sanhedrim at the great festivals, to keep the peace.

¶ *Servants.* These were the Levites who served in the temple, and attended upon the Sanhedrim, under officers. The soldiers went from a suspicion that resistance might be made, and under a pretence probably of keeping the peace.

¶ *Lanterns and torches.* See *Cut*, Mark 14: 43. These were carried by soldiers on a night march, together with their weapons.

4. *Knowing.* This is a most important declaration as to our Lord's foreknowledge and voluntary meeting of His death. Matt. 26: 54. He had an express work to do—and this was the plan of the Father. ¶ *Should come.* Which were to come. This is the term used in speaking of the future things which the Spirit would show to them—and these things are included in the Spirit's showing, viz—the mystery of His death by wicked hands for the salvation of sinners. ¶ *Went forth.* That is—from His retirement. He went forth into the open moonlight, as it was the time of full moon. ¶ *Whom seek ye?* He would show His voluntary offering of Himself. This brings Him now to approach them, and to yield Himself up, perfectly aware of their intent. Besides, He would have them to own, distinctly, their dreadful design. OBSERVE—"When men sought Him to make Him a king, He fled. Now that they seek Him to put Him to death, He goes forth to meet them."

5, 6. The kiss of Judas that belongs after this paragraph of the narrative, and is given by the other Evangelists,

I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they <sup>c</sup> went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told  
c Ps. 27. 2; 40. 14.

is omitted by John. The answer which the band here give, indicates the hatred which they had toward Him, as they call Him by the despised name of *Nazarene*. This fulfilled the prophecy, (see Matt. 2: 23,) and accordingly also this name went with Him to the cross. ¶ *Judas.* John here notes the fact that Judas was among them, which was to be inferred at any rate, but is mentioned here perhaps as from an eye-witness: Judas having attracted his attention particularly—or perhaps to show that *even Judas*, as one of the terrified group, *fell to the ground* at the presence and word of Jesus. This was something more than a mere natural effect of His unexpected appearing, or of His innocence upon their self-reproaching consciences. It was such a glimpse of His divinity as now shone through His flesh, which brought them to the ground. Criminals are often deeply moved at the presence of innocent men, especially of innocent sufferers. But no mere human look could so have prostrated them, as now probably brought all, even Judas, to the ground. It was like the effect of the earthquake and angels afterwards, in the miracle of bursting the sepulchre. Our Lord thus proved how able He was to crush all His foes—so that His death was not from helplessness, but from choice.

7. *Again.* He asked the same question a second time, that in so important a case they might fully declare their purpose, and that He might as fully and understandingly yield Himself up to them.

8. *I am He.* Literally—I am. So He shall reveal Himself at the last day

you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, <sup>a</sup> let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, <sup>b</sup> Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 Then <sup>c</sup> Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the

<sup>a</sup> 1s. 53, 6.    <sup>b</sup> Ep. 5. 25.    <sup>c</sup> e. 17. 12.    <sup>d</sup> Matt. 26. 51.  
Mar. 14. 47.    Lu. 22. 49, 50.

as the "I am," to the everlasting dismay of His enemies. ¶ *Let these go.* He would have these Apostles who were with Him left untouched. This was as much as to say to them, *Go*. This shows that He knew of the violent intent of Judas' band, and plainly saw that they sought Him, to destroy Him. Therefore, with a clear plan, according to which He alone was then to die, and not His Apostles, He bespeaks their release and safety. His Divine purpose is most particular. It confounds no different persons nor interests. Nothing can occur contrary to His eternal plan. Not even the mad fury of His foes can overreach His wisdom, or overmatch His provision. These trembling Apostles had yet a great work to do, in preaching His Gospel, and bearing witness of His Resurrection.

9. *That the saying.* In ch. 17: 12, our Lord uttered these words as a prediction. When he said—"None of them is lost: but the son of perdition (is lost)," He looked forward to this very time, and now He provides for what He had predicted, while it agreed entirely with the plan of the traitor. But the prediction had also a deeper meaning, and looked forward to the higher truth, that He will keep all His own true followers, that none of them will ever be lost, while traitors and hypocrites, like this son of perdition, will be lost—and that this temporal deliverance now was only an earnest of that spiritual safe-keeping which He pledges in His covenant of grace.

10. Immediately after this opening incident, the kiss of Judas was given as a signal, for the arrest of Jesus. It was as the band laid hold of Him that

high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup <sup>d</sup> which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 Then the band and the cap-

<sup>d</sup> Matt. 26. 22; 26. 39, 42.

Peter, in prompt resistance, drew his sword. John is the only Evangelist who has given these names. Some suppose that this is because Peter was dead before this narrative was written, and that the others had avoided the names because it might have brought upon Peter some public punishment, if his name had been given in his lifetime. But it is stated that a relative of this Malchus detected Peter (vs. 26) as though he identified him, possibly, with that transaction. See Notes on Matt. 26: 51, 52.

11. The reply of our Lord is given in Matthew very much as here, with the addition of the reason there set forth—that the sword is not His weapon, and should not be theirs—and that they who use merely carnal weapons shall fall by them—and that He needs no such defence in that extremity, for He could surely pray the Father, and obtain twelve legions of angels in His aid—that, therefore, His death was most fully anticipated and voluntary. This last idea He here expresses. ¶ *The cup.* In Matthew this is given, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be." He would have them understand that He was not only voluntary in offering Himself to His betrayers, but that all this was by appointment of the Father, and clearly foretold in their Scriptures. This ought to open their eyes to His great work, and to brace them in this sudden, shocking extremity. Mark alone records the healing of the servant's ear, with the remark of our Lord, "Suffer ye thus far." See Notes on Mark.

12. The other Evangelists here record our Lord's protest, at the same

tain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

¶ 13 And led them away to Annas<sup>a</sup> first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same<sup>1</sup> year.

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel<sup>b</sup> to the Jews, that it

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 3. 2.      <sup>1</sup> And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest.      <sup>b</sup> c. 11 49. 50.

time, against such an armed attack. Had He not taught openly among them, and was there any disposition in Him to make resistance? He would have them understand, as well as the disciples, that He needed not to be hunted as a fugitive, nor laid under military arrest as an armed ROEBER, (not "a thief,") but that He was a voluntary sufferer. So He will have it testified before earth and hell, that He has a purpose to accomplish in His death, and that though they will be held guilty, they "would have had no power over Him, except it were given them from above."

¶ 144. JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS. PETER THRICE DENIES HIM.—*Jerusalem.*

|           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.     |
| 26. 57-58 | 14. 53-54 | 22. 54-62 | 18. 13-18 |
| 69-75     | 66-72     |           | 25-27     |

13. *Annas first.* The other Evangelists mention only the arraignment before Caiaphas. John gives this additional particular and a reason for it. See vs. 13, 24. The former relations which Annas had sustained to the High Priesthood, both in himself and in his family, would make him an honorary officer still. He had been High Priest eleven years, and five of his sons had succeeded him in the office which was now held by his son-in-law—and he himself was probably a *vice High Priest*. Besides, in so special a case, it would seem fit that he should be consulted. If, as is supposed, he lived in another quarter of the same palace with Caiaphas, it would be still another reason for such an incidental turning aside to this venerable dignitary, and former

was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 And<sup>c</sup> Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 26. 58, &c. Mar. 14. 54. Lu. 22. 54.

chief of the nation. ¶ *That same year.* This particular notice is given both here and in ch. 11: 49; as if to connect these two acts of Caiaphas, and to show that he who there uttered such remarkably prophetic words, and was so determined beforehand upon Jesus' death as a stroke of public policy, is the same who, of course, condemned Him here in the trial; accordingly the next verse further explains.

14. This Caiaphas, the same who is spoken of in ch. 11: 49, was he who gave counsel in the Sanhedrim for our Lord's being put to death as a political expedient, lest the whole nation should be destroyed by the Romans. This is here mentioned to show that Caiaphas had already given judgment against Jesus, so that a fair trial was not to be expected there.

15. *Another disciple.* Literally—the *other disciple*, a phrase by which John often speaks of himself. It is judged by some to denote in this connexion the close intimacy which existed between Peter and John, (one of a well known pair,) as is elsewhere apparent, in the history. We also infer that this other disciple was John, from the record in Acts 4: 13, that "*they* (the Sanhedrim) *took knowledge* of them," (Peter and John)—*recognized* them—that they had been with Jesus at the trial. The narrative here agrees with Mark's, that "Peter followed Him afar off." It also appears from John's being *known* to the High Priest, that he was of some consequence in Jerusalem, where he had a home.

16. *That kept the door.* It is yet customary in the East, to have female

without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

porters at the houses of the great. We visited the palace of a wealthy Jew, in Damascus, and were admitted by a maid, who kept the door, receiving a fee for her service.

18. *A fire of coals.* The term is *anthracite*, though not used to designate a kind of *stone-coal* as now, but a *fire of coals* from wood. ¶ *Cold.* At this Passover season, the nights are often cold in Palestine. We were in Damascus at the corresponding time, and though the temperature would not be the same every year, it was decidedly cold, within the season of the festival. ¶ *Peter stood with them.* Not unlikely Peter was more conscience-stricken than cold—and it would appear that he took his place among the servants to seem as one of them, and to stand by his denial. For an account of Peter's *denial*, see Matt. 26: 69, Notes. *Tholuck* notes, however, that Peter's entering where certain death would have resulted if he had been detected as the one who wounded Malchus, is proof of a courage which could only have sprung from devoted love to the Master.

§ 145. JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS. HE DECLARES HIMSELF TO BE THE CHRIST.—*Jerusalem.*

Morning of the sixth day of the week.

|           |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.      |
| 26. 59-68 | 14. 55-65 | 22. 63-71 | 18. 19-24. |

19. This questioning may possibly have been a preliminary one before Annas, as would seem from vs. 24, where Annas is represented as sending Him "*therefore*"—on the ground of that examination—*bound*, as a prisoner to Caiaphas. See Notes on Luke 22:

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

¶ 19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

61. The inquiries seem here to be quite different from those given by the other Evangelists—being in regard to His doctrine and His disciples, and having no formality of witnesses, &c. such as the others relate. If this be so, the section as given by the other Evangelists would relate to the formal questioning before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim—and this to the preliminary questioning by Annas given by John alone. How Annas is called the High Priest in that case, is perhaps no more difficult to account for than that Christ should have been sent to him *at all*, and sent to him *first*, as John relates. Luke calls them both High Priests in Acts 4: 6. There were arrangements about the High Priesthood that we do not now fully understand, else this matter would be clear. It is enough to know that Annas had long borne the office—had had five sons successively in the office—and now, as John states by way of accounting for this incident in the trial, He was father-in-law of the acting High Priest. It has usually been understood, however, that this examination was before Caiaphas, and that vs. 24 should read, "Now Annas *had* sent Him bound to Caiaphas." This is favored by the notice of Caiaphas in vs. 14, as though it was he who presided at the trial, though this verse may be included in the parenthesis. ¶ *Of His disciples.* The fact that our Lord was gathering many disciples, and that they would soon wield a formidable power against the Jewish hierarchy, alarmed the priesthood—and the object of this question was to draw something from Him, as to their numbers and strength, and as to His

20 Jesus answered him, I spake  
 \* openly to the world: I ever  
 taught in the synagogue, and in  
 the temple, whither the Jews  
 always resort: and <sup>b</sup> in secret  
 have I said nothing.

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 4. 15. c. 7. 14, 26, 28; 8. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Ac. 26. 26.

teachings, that might be used for His condemnation. ¶ *Doctrine.* The aim was to convict Him of some teaching against the Roman government, or against their Jewish law, so that He might be accused before Pilate, or the Sanhedrim, of being an enemy to law and order.

20. *Openly. Boldly*—not in any secret way as one would do who plotted against the government. He had taught in public, and all could know perfectly what His doctrines were—what were His aims and those of His adherents. In the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews resorted always, He declared His views and published them openly for all to hear. This was not the way of one who would carry on some conspiracy against the public good. ¶ *The world.* This is used commonly by John, to denote the outside world who were not of His disciples. ¶ *In secret.* This surely was in His favor, and it was also beyond contradiction. And this He said to show that they who questioned Him did so, not for information, nor with any honest intent of finding out His teachings and position, but to entangle Him in His talk. This had been their mean and wicked plan from the beginning, else He would have answered them freely and fully. See Isa. 45: 19, and 48: 16, where the Messiah speaks.

21. Our Lord here appealed boldly to the public whom He had openly taught. It was, however, no mere popular appeal—nor was it from any thought of enlisting the populace on His side. But it was to show that His doctrine was nothing to conceal nor to be ashamed of—and that He would challenge any fair investigation. This was due to Him, both as to His disci-

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by

ples, and to His doctrine. He could appeal for His rectitude to all who had seen or heard Him. In this, also, He would assert His right, and set an example to all His followers, to walk in wisdom toward them that are without—and to rejoice if reproached for His name—but never to incur suffering as murderers or as thieves, &c. 1 Pet. 4: 14, 15.

22. *One of the officers.* Not one of the servants, but one of the High Priest's attendants, or possibly one of the band who had brought Him thither. The term here refers to an official attendant; and hence, it could not refer to the one whose ear Jesus healed, as some have held—for that term is different, and means not *officer*, but *servant*. Chrysostom breaks forth at this indignity, "Shudder, O Heaven! Be astounded, O earth! at the long suffering of the Master, and the crime of the servants." ¶ *Struck.* The *Greek* does not say, "*with the palm of his hand*," and it may have been with a staff. Literally, it reads, "*Gave him a rap*," (*rapisma*.) Mark has it in another connexion, "Struck Him, or smote Him with *rapismas*—which may mean with their official staves; though it is more likely to smite with the open hand, to slap one on the cheek. ¶ *Answerest thou*, &c. What should He have said rather than to challenge any one of His numerous hearers to bring any charge against Him? It will be observed that the questions recorded by the other Evangelists as put to Jesus by the High Priest were, in order to prove against Him, treason to the State, or an attempt to destroy the Jewish religion. False witnesses were brought forward to substantiate these charges. But they contradicted each other. See Matt. 26: 59-61, &c

struck <sup>a</sup> Jesus <sup>1</sup> with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but <sup>b</sup> if well, why smitest thou me?

24 Now <sup>2</sup> Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

¶ 25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not

<sup>a</sup> Job 16. 10. Je. 20. 2. Ac. 23. 2, 3. <sup>1</sup> or, with a rod.  
<sup>b</sup> 1 Pe. 2. 19-23. <sup>2</sup> See. ver. 13.

thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, (being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and <sup>c</sup> immediately the cock crew.

¶ 28 Then led <sup>d</sup> they Jesus from Caiaphas unto <sup>3</sup> the hall of judgment: and it was early: and they themselves went

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 26. 74. Mar. 14. 72. Lu. 22. 60. c. 13. 38.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. 27. 2, &c. Mar. 15. 1, &c. Lu. 23. 1, &c. <sup>3</sup> or, Pilate's house.

Hence, our Lord's appeal to witnesses has much meaning. The High Priest could give his vote only in case of a tie; but here he teases Jesus, and harangues them to pass capital sentence.

23. *Spoken evil.* Our Lord did not bear this blow in silence, but mildly and firmly replied. He had only uttered a fair declaration of His innocence, and had appealed to all who had so often heard him. Therefore, He had now answered as He ought.

¶ *Bear witness.* Say what it is that I have answered wrong, so as to deserve this violent blow. Testify in a legal way to the crime, if it be such. It was every way proper that He should insist on His legal rights. His direction to turn the other cheek, was in case of private injuries. But this was a public trial in a public cause—where the interests of truth and justice were at stake, and He would not be condemned and abused as an evil doer, without declaring His innocence for the truth's sake.

24. *Now Annas.* See Note, vs. 19. If Annas and Caiaphas lived in the same palace, as may be supposed, or transacted public business in the same, or even in neighboring buildings, this sending the prisoner to Annas first, in deference to his venerable position, and then to Caiaphas, would be perfectly natural, and though not necessary to be noted, would be given by

John in his minute detail of this part of the history,

25. See Notes, Matt. 26: 72-74.

26. *Being his kinsman, &c.* John is the only one who tells us this. But it accounts to us incidentally for this man's recognizing Peter, as he was a relative of Malchus and would naturally have seen him, as he was on the spot, and says that he "saw him in the garden with Him."

§ 146. THE SANHEDRIM LEAD JESUS AWAY TO PILATE.—*Jerusalem.*

Matt. 27. 1, 2. | Mark. 15. 1-5. | Luke. 23. 1-5. | John. 18. 28-38.

28. *Hall of judgment—The Pretorium.* Our Lord had now been condemned by the Sanhedrim. Matt. 26: 66; Mark 14: 64. But they had no power to carry their sentence of death into execution, without a reference to the Roman governor, vs. 31. They therefore hurry off their prisoner to Pilate, of whom they mean to demand His condemnation and death. The Pretorium was at the residence of the Roman governor—the former palace of Herod. It was the place where trials were held by the governor, or *Prator*. In the front, in the open court, was an elevated place with a tessellated stone pavement, upon which was placed the seat of judgment. ¶ *Lest, &c.* These very wretches who were not fearing to accuse the inno-

not into the judgment hall, lest <sup>a</sup> they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor,

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 10. 28.

cent Son of God, were afraid of ceremonial defilement from entering the apartment of the heathen magistrate. The entrance of a Jew into the house of a Gentile made him unclean until the evening. Some have held, therefore, that the paschal lamb could not yet have been eaten, and that our Lord ate the Passover one day before the Jewish nation, on this last occasion, so as to be crucified on the day for killing the Lamb—as Himself the true Passover. But if the lamb had not been killed the evening previously, it could not be killed until the evening of that day, and hence the eating would be brought into the next day, (as the Jews' day commenced at evening,) and hence the law of defilement could not apply, as it affected them only for *the same day*. See Notes ch. 19: 14. It is more probable that the phrase here, "*eat the Passover*," is used in the more general sense of *keeping the paschal feast*, and is not confined to the eating of the lamb. The whole narrative supposes no variation here from the ordinary time of eating it. They shunned the ceremonial defilement as it would prevent them from the ceremonies of that day, which were very specially solemn, since the next day was their Sabbath day—which was a *high day* on this occasion—and the "preparation of the Passover" drew on—that is, the *Passover preparation* for the Sabbath. See vs. 14–31. When the preparation for the Sabbath occurred *on a feast day*, as in this case, they began it at noon. See Notes, Mark 15, 42.

29. *Came forth*. That is, came out into the open court from the Pretorium, as they were not willing to enter

we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us <sup>b</sup> to put any man to death:

<sup>b</sup> Ge. 49. 10. Eze. 21. 27.

it. ¶ *What accusation*. Pilate had a general knowledge of the case—but now he must have the formal accusation—and unless he should proceed in a formal way he would be chargeable before his own government. He had already granted them the band for His apprehension, vs. 3.

30. *If he*. The term *He* is emphatic here. *If this one—this fellow*—were not an evil-doer—*malefactor*. The Sanhedrim are impatient, and cannot wait for a formal process, but demand His condemnation on the basis of their own action. They say nothing of the charge of blasphemy, upon which they had judged Him, lest Pilate might dismiss the case as Gallio did, (Acts 18: 16): for that being a matter of the Jews' religion, he might easily decline to concern himself about it.

31. Pilate would not act as the mere creature of the Sanhedrim. And, at any rate, he wished to have nothing to do in executing their severe purpose against one whom he regarded as at worst a Jewish fanatic. Possibly he had some lurking thought of His being a superior personage, or of this being a case that might involve him in serious difficulty. Therefore, he tells them to attend to the case themselves, and proceed with Him *according to their law*; that is, to inflict a Jewish punishment—as scourging or excommunication. ¶ *It is not lawful*, &c. This course would not answer their bloody purpose. Nothing less than His death would satisfy them, and this was not lawful for them, since Judea had come under the Roman power. The Talmud tells us that they lost this power of putting to death, some forty years or more before the destruction of Jerusa-

32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, <sup>a</sup> signifying what death he should die.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 20. 19. Lu. 18. 32, 33.

lem, which would be about the thirtieth year of our Lord. The case of Stephen, whom they put to death by stoning, is brought forward by some to show that they retained this power of life and death at that time, say A. D. 34. But that was a tumultuous proceeding, and in such case of riot it was sometimes allowed by the authorities—or passed by. Josephus, speaking of the stoning of James the Just, says that it was not lawful for the Sanhedrim to execute capital sentence, without the sanction of the governor. It is probable, from all that can be ascertained, that the Jews were allowed to try all causes except those of capital crime, which were reserved for the governor; to be attended to on his visit to the great festivals. It was the custom in Jerusalem to execute such criminals, at the feasts. There is no sufficient evidence that they had the power of life and death in religious cases, as of blasphemy, &c., else why should they have referred this case to Pilate, when they were so impatient for His death.

32. The connexion here is this—the Jews decline to take Pilate's counsel. If they had been satisfied without demanding His death by the Roman law, Christ would not have been crucified—for crucifixion was a Roman punishment. If it had been lawful for the Jews to put a man to death, it would have been done by *stoning*, which was their mode of capital punishment. Therefore, all this took place in fulfillment of what He had said, signifying by what manner of death He was about to die.

33. Pilate, after this unsuccessful conference with the Jews outside the hall, went in and called Jesus within,

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own <sup>b</sup> nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?

<sup>b</sup> c. 19. 11. Ac. 3. 13.

to answer before Him to the charge of claiming to be the King of the Jews. He may have wished to hear His own account of the matter, by a private examination, apart from the clamors of the Jewish multitude.

34. Jesus asks him whether he puts this question on his own account, or whether it is only at the instance of others—the Jewish throng. There might have been some thoughts crossing the mind of Pilate, that Christ was possibly some superior personage indeed, (ch. 19: 8, 12,) or, this may refer only to the *sense* in which Pilate meant the question of His being King. If he asked of himself, he meant it in the *political* sense. This would be a false charge against Christ. But if he asked it at the instance of the Jews, Christ did indeed claim to be King, only in a higher and spiritual meaning, vs. 36. Our Lord suggests that in the sense in which they were accusing Him before Pilate, that is, of aspiring to the throne of Cæsar, He was not a King, and that Pilate ought not to be influenced by their malicious charges.

35. Pilate replies that he was not to be understood as committed to his accusers, or as sympathizing with them—much less, as being himself the accuser in this matter. It was a Jewish charge, and all that he had to do was to hear and adjudge the case as a public officer. ¶ *What hast Thou done?* Pilate accordingly asks for the prisoner's own statement. He would naturally be curious to know from Himself, as he had heard so much of Him: and as he now saw the excitement among the Jews against Him, he intimates, in the preceding clause, that there was a presumption of some guilt, where His



36 Jesus \* answered, My <sup>b</sup> kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the

a 1 Ti. 6. 13. b Ps. 45. 3, 6. Is. 9. 6, 7. Da. 2. 44; 7. 14. Zec. 9. 9. Lu. 12. 14. c. 6. 15. Ro. 14. 17. Col. 1. 13.

own nation, and its officers and court had handed Him over for sentence—Pilate is here seen to be the inventor of that oft-repeated artifice of infidels, that of regarding the religion of Christ as local and national, and not for the world. What have we citizens of Rome to do with the hopes of the Jews? Our Lord answers, that as the King of truth, He has claims that are universal as truth itself. So, alas! will the infidel find, that in all the universe he can get no refuge from the tremendous sovereignty of truth, in Jesus. See vs. 37.

36. Here Christ puts in an explanation of His claims. He was a King, out not in Pilate's sense, and not in the sense of this Jewish accusation. He was not aiming to occupy the temporal throne of Caesar. If He were, His whole course would be different. Instead of these poor scattered disciples, He would have trained soldiers, fighting men. ¶ *Not of this world.* Not of a worldly nature, like the kingdoms of this world. It is of *another world*. The kingdom of Christ must have worldly resources, must attract to itself worldly wealth and power, and must control the kingdoms of the earth, so as at length to possess universal dominion in the world. But it is not to be promoted by arms, as worldly kingdoms—or as the religion of Mohammed and the Pope. It is advanced upon other principles—by other and spiritual means. And Pilate could see that he need have no political suspicions of Christ. He who allowed Himself to be arrested by His enemies, and to be brought unresistingly before their tribunal, could have no political aims. ¶ *If My kingdom.* The construction here is emphatic. Literally—*If the kingdom which is Mine, were, &c.* ¶ *My servants.* My official attendants. The term is different from that which

Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a

means *servant*, and which is distinguished from this in vs. 18. This which is here used means an official of some kind, and was originally a military officer, and hence some understand it to refer to *angels*. But His Apostles were angels of the church, and would have been *warriors* instead, if He had so planned His kingdom. ¶ *Fight*—would have fought. ¶ *Delivered.* This refers onward to ch. 19: 16, which event He already had clearly in mind. ¶ *But now.* The Romish church pretends to understand that our Lord put an emphasis on the word "*now*," to imply that *afterward* it would be a worldly kingdom—as though it could ever change! It means "*now*,"—as opposed to any other case, and to such case as would call for their fighting—"*now*"—the nature of my kingdom is not carnal, and its weapons are not such. It is not of this world—but it is of another and higher world. The words "*but now*," are equivalent to *but indeed—but the truth is*—the true nature of my kingdom, as distinct from the worldly is, that it is spiritual, and it can never be otherwise.

37. *Art thou?* Do you then mean to say that you are a King? only of a different sort? Do you so far admit the truth of the charge, and only take refuge behind some quibble? ¶ *Thou sayest.* This idiom of the Syro-Chaldaic signifies, "I am what thou sayest." See Mark 15: 2, *Notes*. ¶ *For this cause.* Our Lord now maintains the truth of His mission, and shows that His kingdom is that of Truth. He is to "bring forth judgment unto truth." "He presents His royalty on that side of it best calculated for the doubting philosophic mind of the day, of which Pilate was a partaker." He asserts His Divine origin—born with a *purpose*—and His Incarnation—having

king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear <sup>a</sup> witness unto the truth. Every one <sup>b</sup> that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto

a Is. 55. 4. Re. 1. 5; 3. 14. b c. 8. 47. 1 Jno. 4. 6.

come into the world, from heaven, for a purpose. He comes as the King of Truth—to gain a victory for truth—to make conquests for it in human hearts, that are buried in ignorance and error, and to establish the universal reign of truth in doctrine, in principle, in moral administration, and in redemption. “Mercy and truth are met together.” Not that He is a King only as a Teacher, for His teaching alone would effect little, but as a King He subdues men to the truth, makes them to be of the truth, and puts down all enemies of truth, casting all liars into the lake of fire, with the father of lies. OBSERVE—1. Jesus confronted by false witnesses, and sentenced by a false-hearted ruler, is the Great Head and Leader of the “Witnesses for the truth,” and of holy martyrs to the truth. 2. While truth seems to sustain a sad defeat, it conquers, and shows its Kingly connection and ultimate supremacy. ¶ *Every one.* As My kingdom belongs to the higher domain of truth, it is recognized only by such as are of the truth. What a rebuke to this false-hearted, self-contradicting governor. Who shall dare attempt to crush out truth from the universe? What a shame-faced complaint is it that truth threatens to prevail.

38. *What is truth?* In whatever spirit this was said, whether of *sincerity* or of *despondency*, it was the expression of that philosophic doubt and skepticism which characterized that age. Grecian and Roman philosophy had thus virtually confessed its inability to solve the great problems of the soul. Their highest advance of mental culture could

them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

¶ 39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas! Now Barabbas was a robber.

only ask, after all, blindly as ever, *What is truth?* Who knows? Who presumes to tell, after so many vain inquiries of the world's sages?—What a confession was this, in the face of Divine truth itself, that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” Ah! Pilate! Truth, as personated in Jesus Christ, though condemned and crucified by false judgments of worldly powers, shall *rise again and reign*. This is the kind of questioning which the world makes. It is rather a taunt thrown out against Christ and His religion—it waits for no answer. ¶ *I find no fault.* Thus Pilate mocks both the Witness to the truth, and the haters of the truth. Miserable man. Yet here he testifies to the innocence of his prisoner. I find no fault in Him, however *you Jews* may do. “For he knew that the chief priest had delivered Him from envy.” OBSERVE—Here Luke records the sending of Jesus to Herod as Pilate's shift, to get rid of deciding the case. See Luke ch. 23: 6–12, Notes.

¶ 148. PILATE SEEKS TO RELEASE JESUS. THE JEWS DEMAND BARABBAS. Jerusalem.

|           |          |           |            |
|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Matt.     | Mark.    | Luke.     | Joh. n.    |
| 27. 15-26 | 15. 6-15 | 23. 13-25 | 18. 39-40. |

See Notes on Matt. 27: 15.

Pilate regarded Jesus as an enthusiast, and hence, not deserving of death. Alas, how many are willing to pronounce Him innocent, but rebel at the thought of relying on Him for salvation—cannot bear to think of Him as made a *curse* for us—because this would be to acknowledge their own grievous sin and perishing need

## CHAPTER XIX.

¶ **T**HEN <sup>a</sup> Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged <sup>b</sup> him.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 27. 26, &c. Mar. 15. 15, &c. <sup>b</sup> Is. 53. 5.

of salvation. "*Jesus was a very good man,*" says the world. So said Pilate. But if this be all that you can say, the clamor of the world would drive you soon to give Him over to crucifixion. "Jesus or Barabbas?" is at last the question. Who shall die? The *God-Man* Christ Jesus, or the murderer and robber? Shame! The world prefers the vilest of the vile before Christ! And yet rejoice. Christ's death is the only hope for the vilest of men!—Christ dies, and thus only is any Barabbas set free. "This is a faithful saying (says Paul,) and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1: 15. See Acts 3: 13. Jesus and the guilty sinner exchange places. The sinner, condemned and awaiting his dreadful death, is now freely released by this wonderful *substitution* of Christ. Not that the sinner has been found innocent—but that Christ has taken his place, and he is set free. Yet Barabbas will after all, die eternally if he believe not in Jesus. Christ's interposition will do us no saving good, if we see not in Him our glorious and Divine substitute—on whom our sins were laid, and who freely died for us.

## CHAPTER XIX.

¶ 149. PILATE DELIVERS UP JESUS TO DEATH. HE IS SCOURGED AND MOCKED.—*Jerusalem.*

Matt. 27. 26-30 | Mark. 15. 15-19 | Luke. | John. 19: 1-3.

Pilate had yielded so far as to set free Barabbas, instead of Jesus. That

Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

¶ 4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that <sup>a</sup> I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the

<sup>c</sup> o. 18. 33. ver. 6.

door of release was thus closed. "He delivered Jesus to their will."—*Luke.*

1. *Scourged Him.* It would seem from the other Evangelists that this scourging was directly in connexion with His sentence, and that it was preparatory to the crucifixion. This was the Roman custom, to scourge those who were condemned to be crucified, especially *slaves*, making this the most ignominious punishment. It appears, however, that this was now done to so far satisfy the Jewish demand as to leave room for another appeal for His release, vs. 4.

2, 3. See Notes on Matt. 27: 29, 30.

¶ 150. PILATE AGAIN SEEKS TO RELEASE JESUS.—*Jerusalem.*

Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John. 19. 4-16.

4. *Therefore.* Whether Pilate was moved himself by this cruel treatment of one whom he judged innocent of the charges and of any crime, or whether he had all along hoped to make a successful appeal after proceeding thus far, does not appear. Our Lord's meek, unresisting conduct under such severities, doubtless impressed Pilate more deeply than before, of His innocence. He had been before Pilate in the judgment hall, (ch. 18: 33,) and now He is brought forth for another effort to appease the Jews, and, at least, to give the full weight of the Governor's testimony for His release. It was also Pilate's formal and solemn protest that he, after a full and honest judgment of the case, could not pronounce Him guilty.

5. *Purple robe.* "The image which the brutal insolence of soldiers here

purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold, the man!

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*! *Pilate* saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify

*him*; for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We <sup>a</sup> have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because <sup>b</sup> he made himself the son of God.

8 When *Pilate* therefore heard

*a* Lc. 24. 16.

*b* c. 5. 18; 10. 33.

creates, as if by the sport of accident, has become the most touching representation of divine majesty in the form of a servant."—*Tholuck*. The King of kings indeed, in voluntary humiliation. What a spectacle was this to move the hardest hearts! This innocent and adorable being, whom neither Herod nor *Pilate* could find aught against—so mocked, as though scourging with knotted whips upon His bare flesh were not enough! ¶ *Behold the man!* *Pilate* pointed to Him as a spectacle calculated to move them. Was not this enough? Behold the man! who is neither usurper nor robber, nor anything else but a poor innocent, helpless man, whom in common humanity you ought to set free. How powerless is this unresisting person to do mischief against Moses or *Cæsar*! He is nothing but a despised, down-trodden creature—here at your mercy! Why not let Him go?

6. The sight of Him only stirred up their rage to a fury, and they clamor for His crucifixion. ¶ *Take ye Him, &c.* *Pilate* had, before this, bidden them to take Him and proceed against Him according to their law. Ch. 18: 31. But this they were not satisfied with, as their law did not allow them to execute sentence of death. Now *Pilate* goes further, and says, "Go on if you will, and crucify Him without law." The Jews did sometimes inflict capital punishment—though they had no right by law, as in case of *Stephen*, some six or eight years after this—and it was suffered to pass as a riotous proceeding. *Pilate* seems now to be worried and vexed, and bids them take their own course, and take the responsibility, as he could not sentence the prisoner, against law and justice.

7. The Jews now reply that according to their own law, He is worthy of death as a blasphemer. Levit. 24: 16; Deut. 13: 1-5. This was, indeed, the very charge upon which they had tried and condemned Him before their court—the Sanhedrim. They mean now to inform *Pilate* that their law condemns Him to death, and it is only in deference to the Roman restraint upon them that they do not execute the sentence. ¶ *Ought*. Not only in justice, but according to law. They therefore state the charge—which is a new charge to *Pilate*. They had accused Christ only of such a crime as they supposed the Roman Governor would care for or take notice of. But since he would throw the responsibility upon them, and decline to sentence Him to death, they state their own sentence, and the demands of their law. They have no other resort, and they will throw upon *Pilate* the responsibility of refusing to confirm their sentence, and thus, perhaps, provoking riot. Would he drive them to take the law into their own hands? That would encourage them to rebel against *Cæsar*. ¶ *Made Himself*. Set Himself up as the Son of God—claimed to be such. They had at first accused Him before *Pilate*, as claiming to be *King*, with the hope that this would secure His condemnation as a rival of *Cæsar*. But there was another view of His claim that would give ground for the charge of blasphemy. As the Messiah, He was not only the King of His people, and King of kings, but He was the Son and Fellow of the Father. Ch. 6; Heb. 1. ¶ *Son of God*. *Pilate* had called Him "*The Man*," vs. 5. This, perhaps, encouraged them to come forward now with this accusation.

that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But <sup>a</sup> Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him,  
a Ps. 38. 13. Is. 53. 7. Matt. 27. 12. 14. Ph. 1. 28.

8. *That saying.* That He claimed to be the Son of God. Pilate had all along been impressed in His favor—and not unlikely had seen enough in the conduct and look of this glorious personage to awaken some suspicion of His superiority. “This saying” now, that He claimed to be “*the Son of God*,” fell in with his awakened fears—and he was more reluctant than ever to pass sentence. As a heathen, he may have had only some vague ideas of His being the Son of a Deity. But the very presence of such a spotless Being and His whole demeanor, went to his conscience, and made him instinctively shudder when he heard what he already felt—that He was somehow related to the Gods. Besides, his superstitious feeling may have been aroused by the message of his wife to him, that she had suffered many things in a dream because of this just man. Matt. 27: 19.

9. *Went again*—leading Jesus with him, as he had just before brought Him out. He wished to make private, personal inquiry—such as his aroused fears would suggest. ¶ *Whence.* This inquiry related, not to His earthly, but to His Divine origin, as claimed by Him. Tell me, are you a mere man, or are you from God? ¶ *No answer.* This was a matter that Pilate was not prepared to understand, and Christ would not proclaim His Divinity merely to obtain His release. He labored to explain this profound subject to His disciples for their instruction and confidence, and future consolation. But He would not unfold it to Pilate as a reason for His being set free. Had He pleased, He could have accomplished His deliverance by calling for twelve legions of angels. Matt.

Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest<sup>b</sup> thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou<sup>c</sup> couldst have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from

b Da. 3. 14. 15. c Lu. 22. 53. e. 7. 30.

26: 53. He was a voluntary sufferer—going up to a death which He foreknew, and to which He devoted Himself as a vicarious sacrifice. Therefore He will no more satisfy Pilate of His Godhead for His deliverance, than He would satisfy Satan in the wilderness, and no more than He would work a miracle for Herod. Besides He knew Pilate's heart, and that only they who are of the truth, hear His voice. Ch. 18: 37. Further, this very silence showed Him to be Divine. It was the best answer to Pilate's question. It displayed His calm preparation for the worst—and doubtless in His meek, mild, heavenly look, He showed Himself to be the *Lamb of God, led to the slaughter, and opening not His mouth.* Isa. 53: 7. Would any mere man have refused an answer to such a question in such a case?

10. Pilate, worried and wavering, cannot bear to be thus defeated in His object. He is pressed by the Jews on one side—by his troubled conscience on the other. He would fain know what is his prisoner's origin, and whether He be such as He claims and seems. He therefore is disappointed at getting no reply. He now appeals to his prisoner's fears—boasts his power of office—suggest that he has the prisoner's life in his hands. “This is his self conviction of injustice. No just judge has any such power as this, to loose or to punish,” nor any power to do contrary to law and justice. 2 Cor. 13: 8.

11. *No power.* Our Lord, in His wonderful reply, shows Pilate his own origin, and the origin of His power—that He who boasts so much, is but a creature of God. This might sufficiently show to Pilate that his prisoner

above: <sup>a</sup> therefore he <sup>b</sup> that delivered me unto thee hath the greater <sup>c</sup> sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 59. 9.    <sup>b</sup> Mar. 14. 44.    <sup>c</sup> 18. 3.    <sup>c</sup> He. 6. 4-8. Ja. 4. 17.

claims to be of God. He acknowledges, 1. Pilate's power, but that it is not of his own right or production, but as granted him by God, extending only so far as He pleases. He owns, 2. That Pilate's power is given him from on High. 3. He owns that that power bears against Himself just because all things are done respecting Him, according to the Divine decree. ¶ *From above.* From on High, from Heaven. Rom. 13: 1. "There is no power but of God—the powers that be are ordained of God." Thus our Lord intimates His divine and heavenly origin. He claims here to know what is from above, and whence Pilate received his power, and how he holds it—and He plainly implies that *thence* whence Pilate has his power by appointment and upon sufferance, He has come. By the term here rendered *given* is not meant a mere permission, but the decree and appointment of God. And without this he would have no power over Him, neither of crucifying nor of releasing, nor any other power. ¶ *Therefore.* As though He had said, You happen to hold the *power* in this case, but the Sanhedrim and Judas, who have delivered me up to you, have the *will*. Theirs is the great crime of the deed. Our Lord knew the heart, and hence He knew that Pilate, with all his reluctance to execute the will of the Jews, was not the chief offender simply because the legal power rested with him. ¶ *He that delivered.* This may include any who had officially or actively to do with it. Caiaphas the High Priest, who in his office was set to be a type of this Great High Priest, or Judas, or both, with the Sanhedrim. ¶ *The greater sin.* While Pilate held the power, the crime lay chiefly with those who were pressing him, against his convictions, to have Jesus crucified.

Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever <sup>a</sup> maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.

<sup>d</sup> Lu. 23. 2.    <sup>a</sup> Ac. 17. 7.

Our Lord included also in their blame that they had the Divine oracles, and the prophecies of the Messiah, and as they ought to have known *whence He was*, (of which Pilate might be ignorant with comparative impunity,) they were the most guilty—guilty of *crucifying the Lord of glory*. This was charged against them after the ascension, (Acts 2: 23); and it was then said that "*had they known it*," they would not have done it. But they are here declared to be eminently *guilty for not having known it*. ¶ *Sin.* Here our Lord speaks as Himself the *Judge*—and "*that Just one*," of whom Pilate's wife had dreamed. Any thing done against Him was *Sm.* This poor, trembling, vacillating Pilate shall tremble more fearfully before this abused Jesus, at the last day.

12. *From thenceforth.* From henceforth—Literally, *from this time*. These words went to his conscience—deepened his convictions of the majesty as well as innocence of his prisoner—and not merely because he judged Him innocent, but especially because he saw in Him the marks of His Divinity, and because His words and looks went deeply to his soul, did Pilate quail before Jesus, and seek now very earnestly to release Him. ¶ *If thou, &c.* The Jews seeing Pilate's wavering, brought home to the timid, unprincipled judge, a personal threat, which moved him to give way. They charge him that to release Jesus will be to prove himself false to his government, and to render himself liable to be arraigned as a criminal before Cæsar. Cæsar, as we learn from early writers, was most suspicious, and punished with death any offence that bordered on unfaithfulness to his majesty. The emperor then on the throne was Tiberius, but after Julius Cæsar's time, every

13 When <sup>a</sup> Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called

<sup>a</sup> Fr. 29. 25. Ac. 4. 19.

emperor was called *Cæsar*, as every Russian emperor is called the *Czar*. ¶ *Maketh Himself a king*. This was true in word, but false in fact. He had shown that He did not aspire to Cæsar's throne, but that His kingdom was of another world. And though all kingdoms shall at length be His, and all kings shall serve Him, (Isa. 60: 11,) He was not seeking to dethrone Cæsar.

13. *That saying*. This was the clamor that prevailed with Pilate. He trembled at the thought of being arraigned before Cæsar, not knowing that he was dealing with the King of kings and should soon stand before this same Jesus in judgment. It was the fear of man that moved him to yield against all his convictions of truth and duty. ¶ *Forth*. That is, brought Him out from the Pretorium, or Judgment Hall. ¶ *Sat down—for judgment*, as the term signifies. ¶ *Judgment seat*. This was an elevated platform out-side of the Pretorium, fronting on the open Court. Here he received the message from his wife. Matt. 27: 19. ¶ *The Pavement*. This was a platform laid with stones or marbles of various colors—*mosaics*. It was the fashion of ornamenting floors, doorways, &c. as we saw at Rome in the ruins of ancient baths and temples, and at Pompeii in the houses which had been buried by the lava of Vesuvius, and which show the custom in the time of our Lord. Such an ornamental platform, Julius Cæsar carried about with him on his expeditions. ¶ *Gabbatha*. This word used only here, means *elevated*. It denotes the raised platform on which the stone pavement was laid. The term "altar" in the English, has the same derivation from the Latin word *high*.

14. *The preparation*. The preparation for the Sabbath, which was made more solemn at this time because it occurred on the Passover day. See this explained, Notes on Mark ch. 15:

27\*

The Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 And <sup>b</sup> it was the preparation of the passover, and about the

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 27. 62.

25. ¶ *About the sixth hour*. John makes no note of the time, except this of the trial before Pilate, and speaks in most general terms. Mark says, "It was the third hour, and they crucified Him." John speaks of the time in reference to this particular matter: namely, the *preparation time*. The clause is in parenthesis, and would read, "For the preparation of the (Sabbath on this) Passover, (day) was (or began) about the sixth hour." More literally it would read, "But it was the preparation of the Passover, (that day) and (that occurred) about the sixth hour." It is introduced as a reason for Pilate's hastening the decision—that there were only a few hours left for the whole transaction of sentence and execution, before the Jews' holy time began. Josephus mentions a decree of the Emperor Augustus, which exempted the Jews from appearing in law courts, not only on the Sabbath, but also during the preparation before that day. This preparation began usually at the ninth hour, or 3, P. M., but when it occurred on a feast day, as on this occasion, (the Passover,) it commenced at noon, "*the sixth hour*." This, therefore, is what John refers to. See Notes, Mark 15: 25; 16: 42. ¶ *Behold your King!* Pilate here seems to second the claim of Jesus, as if he would charge the Jewish people to accept Him, implying at the same time his confidence that in claiming to be *their* King, He did not set up any claim against Cæsar, though they might so pretend. He seems therefore to bring forward Jesus to them with these words, as a protest against their declaration, vs. 12. This construction of the case he adheres to, vs. 15, "Shall I crucify your King," and vs. 19, in "*the title*" that he insisted on giving to Jesus. His conviction seems to have been that this claim of Jesus was merely a Jewish claim,

sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*; crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We <sup>a</sup> have no king but Cæsar.

16 Then <sup>b</sup> delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.

<sup>a</sup> Ge. 49. 10.  
Lu. 23. 24, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 27. 26, &c. Mar. 15. 15, &c.

and a matter of their religion—and that it was in no way an interference with Cæsar's throne, though he dreaded the clamor of this people, who might so misrepresent it to Cæsar, and so bring condemnation upon him.

15. *We have no king but Cæsar.* This was indeed a shameless confession from the religious officers and teachers of a nation, whose fathers had boasted that God was their King. 1 Sam. 12: 12. Some of these who now thus rejected Christ for Cæsar, as they had already rejected Him for Barabbas, died miserably some forty years after in the very place of Barabbas, for his very crime, of rebellion against Cæsar.

§ 162. JESUS IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.—*Jerusalem.*

|           |           |            |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.      | John.      |
| 27: 31-34 | 15: 20-23 | 23: 26, 33 | 19: 16, 17 |

16. *Delivered he Him.* This is noted by Matthew and Mark as having taken place after the scourging and before the mocking. But Pilate seems to have made the last effort for His release, as noted by John alone, after that cruel scourging which he hoped would move them to let Him go. This, therefore, was his full and final delivery of Jesus for crucifixion. Else we may regard Matthew and Mark as noting the delivery of Jesus only in connection with the scourging and mocking—while John enters more into detail, and gives these further efforts of Pilate, before Jesus was finally yielded up to their hands. ¶ *And they took Jesus, &c.* Matthew just here narrates the remorse of Judas and his

¶ And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

17 And he bearing his cross, went <sup>c</sup> forth into a place called *the place* of a scull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha;

¶ 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

<sup>c</sup> Nu. 15. 35. He. 13. 12.

suicide, of which John makes no mention. Matthew and Mark also relate that before leading Him away, they stripped Him of the mock purple in which He had been dressed.

17. *Bearing His cross.* The other Evangelists relate the interesting fact, that as Jesus was likely to faint utterly under His cross, the people relieved Him, so that they might not lose the pleasure of His crucifixion—and they laid the cross upon one Simon, from Cyrene, in Africa, coming into the city as they passed out, who was compelled to carry it behind Jesus. ¶ *The place.* See vs. 20, which says that this place was nigh to the city, just outside the gate. ¶ *A scull.* The same word is translated in Luke "*Calvary.*" Ch. 23: 22. See Notes on Luke.

§ 153. THE CRUCIFIXION.—*Jerusalem.*

|           |           |            |           |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.      | John.     |
| 27: 35-38 | 15: 24-28 | 23: 33, 34 | 19: 18-24 |

18. *Jesus in the midst.* This John so touchingly notes, as an eye-witness. The position of Jesus between these malefactors doubtless made a strong impression on his devout and tender heart. OBSERVE—Jesus is (1.) in the midst of the Godhead—yet equal with the Father and Holy Ghost. He is (2.) in the midst of His praying church, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (3.) "In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, He stands as a Lamb that had been slain." Rev. 5: 6. And yet He is here (5.) in the midst of the malefactors!



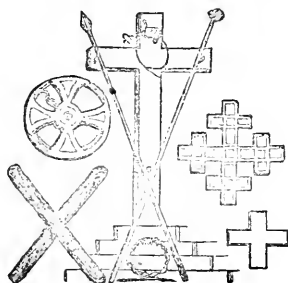
19 And <sup>a</sup> Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 27: 37. Mar. 15: 26. Lu. 23: 33.

19. *The writing was—And it was written.* The other Evangelists have used the term *ἐπιγραφή*, *superscription*. John has it *title*. They have given the writing in different words. For as it was written in *three languages*, there was room for some variety in their way of giving it. See explanation Notes on Luke 23: 38. John gives it “Jesus of Nazareth,” &c. This may have been taken from the Greek superscription. It shows that the name of “Nazarene” accompanied Him to the last. Matt. 2: 23. Matthew and Mark use, also, the term *αἰτεία*—*accusation*, which expresses a crime of which one is *accused*, but not convicted.

20. *Read.* John alone notes this fact, that the title, written so in various tongues, for all to read, was extensively read by the promiscuous multitude of Jews attending at the Passover, and especially as it was nigh to the city, where He was crucified. ¶ *Nigh.* See Notes Luke 23: 33.



*Crosses and Implements.*

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to

21. It was as much as to say, *This man dies as King of the Jews*. This might be construed to their disgrace, as well as to the vindication of Jesus. See Notes, vs. 14, 15. This, therefore, the Sanhedrim complained of. ¶ *But that He said.* They urged that this distinction be made, so that it should appear that He died for His unjust claim and wicked pretension. But even this public declaration was ordered in Divine Providence to set forth the glorious and true title of this murdered Lord.

22. Pilate had a motive for this, and was not to be moved by any urgency of theirs. He had yielded his conscience already to his policy and fears, and he would have this satisfaction at least. Pierced as he must have been by his own compunctions, he was not now to take back anything, but was rather glad if they who had forced him to this deed, could be publicly disgraced also by the transaction.

23. *Garments.* This term is here in the plural, and is used thus of the outer loose garment, or cloak, worn in the East. It is a long piece of cloth thrown round the shoulders, and sometimes fastened at the neck, used also as a covering for the night. Here it is spoken of in the plural, as we speak of one's *robes*, for robe. ¶ *Four parts.* There were four soldiers employed on such an occasion, two on each side of the cross, with a centurion, as would seem, for the officer. The garments of the crucified one were by law the property of the soldiers. ¶ *Coat.* This was the under garment, or vest, called

every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, <sup>1</sup> woven <sup>a</sup> from the top throughout:

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, <sup>b</sup> They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.

1 or, wrought. a Ex. 39. 22. b Ps. 22. 19.

the tunic. See Notes on Matt. 5: 41. Figure. It was the *toga ocellata*, or *byssina*. It was properly a priest's garment, and was woven of linen, and sometimes of wool. See Jos. Ant. 3: 7, 4, where Aaron's vest is thus described. This was His own clothing, and it would seem that He went up to the crucifixion with this portion of the priest's attire, when He was about to die as our Great High Priest. The priest's garments were woven, and such garments without seam are still woven in the East. The tunic was commonly made of two pieces, a front and a back piece, with the sides open and fastened with clasps, or laced with cords.

24. *Not rend it.* For this would have made the parts worthless to any of them; and hence it was most natural for them to think of casting lots for it, so that whoever obtained it, might have the benefit. The outer garment was made up of parts, as borders, fringes, &c., and could easily be divided. Deut. 12: 12. Also, as it was a long piece of cloth, it could be divided among them with advantage. See Figure, Matt. 5: 41. ¶ *That the scripture*, Ps. 22: 19. Thus does the great God of Providence accomplish His decrees, in perfect consistency with the free thought and choice of His creatures, and by motives addressed to their will. He who can thus use free agents as though they were not free, must be the Supreme, Omnipotent Jehovah.

These things therefore the soldiers did.

¶ 25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of <sup>2</sup> Cleophas, <sup>c</sup> and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by <sup>d</sup> whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, <sup>e</sup> behold thy son!

2 or, Cleopas. c Lu. 24. 18. d c. 13. 23. e c. 2. 4.

¶ 154. THE JEWS MOCK AT JESUS ON THE CROSS. HE COMMENDS HIS MOTHER TO JOHN.—*Jerusalem.*

| Matt.     | Mark      | Luke.     | John.     |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 27. 39-44 | 15. 29-32 | 23. 35-37 | 19. 25-27 |
|           |           | 39-43     |           |

25. This touching narrative is given by John only. Two of these three were looking on afar off, with Salome, John's mother, after Jesus had expired. We can easily see how as yet, while He was alive and able to speak, they would be found near to the cross, and within hearing of any word that might drop from His lips. ¶ *The wife of Cleophas.* This Cleophas is generally thought to be not the same as one of the two travelers to Emmaus, (Luke 24: 18. See Notes,)—but the father of James the less, and Joses.

26. *The disciple*, &c. See ch. 13: 23. John gave himself this title not in any vain, worldly boast, but in deep Christian gratitude, glorying only in the love of Christ, (Romans 8: 35,) "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ." Rom. 5: 5. ¶ *Woman.* This title our Lord gave to His mother at the marriage in Cana, when He spake of His office-work as separate from His earthly relations. So, in this higher sense, He declared that all who did the will of His Father were regarded by Him as on the same level with His mother in His affection. And here His earthly relations with her were drawing to a close, and He is about to commend her to another son, His

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!<sup>a</sup> And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own<sup>b</sup> home.

a 1 Ti. 5. 2. b c. 16. 32.

bosom disciple, and he calls her *Woman*. ¶ *Behold thy Son*. This refers to John. There could be no mistake. John was the only one of the twelve that stood there; and all His relations to that disciple would warrant this. It is a double charge. They were to regard each other in the light of son and mother. This disciple was to take His place in the tender, sacred charge of His only earthly parent. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was dead. She was a poor widow, while John had a home in Jerusalem. And not only to John, but to all His true disciples was she commended by this dying act. We find her in their midst at the prayer-meeting. Acts 1: 14. The sword of keenest agony was now piercing her soul, as Simeon had prophesied, (Luke 2: 35,) and the Son that staid behind at the temple, on His first visit, and let her seek Him sorrowing, will not be behind-hand now. He cannot forget her future wants, even in His dying agony. So He commends the church to all His loving disciples, to take care of it in His absence till He come. What a pattern of filial affection! What a Son was this, true to His Father in Heaven, and to His mother on earth. Just ready to enter His own paradise, yet not on this account neglecting the future welfare of His poor, comfortless, afflicted parent, but providing her a substitute, the best on earth. We see no more of her in the sacred narrative, until the meeting at Jerusalem, about Pentecost. Acts 1: 14. The Romanists will have it that our Lord here commended all His disciples through John to the patronage of His mother, whom they call the Blessed Virgin. But in truth, just the converse is true. He commended her to the care of them all. It was *her case* that He was providing for, and not theirs. What a dreadful impiety is it that exalts Mary above Jesus—makes her

¶ 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture<sup>c</sup> might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

c Ps. 69. 21.

to be as holy in her birth as He was—makes her to be a goddess—and then goes to her rather than to Him in prayer, so making Him to be *no God*.

27. *From that hour*. Some suppose that John immediately left the spot with her, and that so she was spared from beholding the painful scenes which followed. The women retired and were looking on afar off. But in vs. 35, John seems to have been present, though he may have returned. Mary is not mentioned among the witnesses of His death. ¶ *Home*. Literally—to his own things—as possessions—home—meaning that he took her to be sharer with him in all the temporal comforts that he had. It has been inferred that John had a comfortable living. He had some property and home, it would seem most probably in Jerusalem—to which he took Mary. There is a tradition of the seventh century that she lived with John, at Ephesus, and died there at a very great age. The Romanists pretend to show her sepulchre at Jerusalem.

¶ 155. DARKNESS PREVAILS. CHRIST EXPIRES ON THE CROSS.—*Jerusalem*.

|           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.     |
| 27. 45-50 | 15. 33-37 | 23. 44-46 | 19. 28-30 |

28. *Accomplished* — finished — the same word as is used in vs. 30, "*It is finished*." ¶ *That the Scripture*. Not that our Lord said these words merely to fulfill the Scriptures, but this thirst and His outcry were so ordered as to bring about this accomplishment. The passage is in Ps. 69: 22. The words are here recognized as a predicting Christ, and we are bound to conclude that they were so intended and recorded by the Spirit. ¶ *I thirst*. The cry "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"—which Matthew and Mark give, was probably uttered in the meantime, when the three hours' darkness also took place. See Notes on

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It <sup>a</sup>is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave <sup>b</sup>up the ghost.

¶ 31 The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, <sup>c</sup>that the bodies should not remain <sup>d</sup>upon the cross on the sab-

<sup>a</sup> c. 17. 4. <sup>b</sup> Is. 53. 10, 12. He. 2. 14, 15. <sup>c</sup> ver. 42. <sup>d</sup> De. 21. 23.

*Matthew and Mark.* They mention the fact that the vinegar was offered, and this statement of John throws light upon it. OBSERVE—The rich man in torment cries out with “THIRST”—and Christ on the cross suffers “THIRST.” It is an anguish which expresses the utmost extreme of destitution, and the sharpest suffering of the soul. *See Notes on Matthew 27: 48.*

30. *It is finished.*—His sacrificial death, and all that was involved in it of His expiatory Work. See vs. 28. His whole course of obedience was now brought to a close. His fulfillment of the Divine purposes, and of His commission from the Father, so far as they looked to His death, was finished. His work of mediation on earth—His fulfillment of predictions, types, and shadows, pointing to Him as the Messiah, was finished. His suffering, which began at Bethlehem, was now finished on the cross. His conflict with the powers of darkness was now finished, and He is ready to triumph over them, nailing them to the cross, as those who were really crucified. His expiatory life He is just now to finish by His expiatory death. ¶ *He gave up the ghost.* Surrendered His Spirit to the Father. Thus He was obedient unto (to the extent of) death. Here the other Evangelists narrate the rending of the Temple veil.

bath-day, (for <sup>e</sup>that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with

<sup>e</sup> Le. 23. 7. 8.

§ 157. THE TAKING DOWN FROM THE CROSS—THE BURIAL.—*Jerusalem.*

Sixth day of the week.

|           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.     |
| 27. 57-61 | 15. 42-47 | 23. 50-56 | 19. 31-42 |

31. *The preparation.* See Notes on Mark 15: 25. See vs. 42. ¶ *An high day.* Literally—*A great day.* “There was a high day on that Sabbath.” Some think that this is so called, as having fallen on the first day of unleavened bread, and so forming a kind of double Sabbath. But if the first day of the feast fell on a Sabbath, so would also the last, which on this ground would be equally great. It was more likely the second day of unleavened bread—the day on which the paschal feast properly commenced—and the Sabbath was called great, because occurring during the Passover, and the only one.

32. *Break the legs.* This was usually done with clubs, or an iron mallet, just above the ankle, after which a blow on the breast put an end to the sufferer's life. *Lactantius, Div. Inst. 4: 26.* OBSERVE—How shockingly false-hearted may a mere formalism in religion be. So eager for the observance of the Sabbath in the outward show, while crucifying the Lord of glory and the Lord also of the Sabbath day!

33. *Dead already.* And He was even “slain from the foundation of the world.”

34. It is not stated that the *thieves*

a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood <sup>a</sup> and water. <sup>b</sup>

35 And <sup>c</sup> he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture <sup>d</sup> should be ful-

<sup>a</sup> He. 9.22. 23. 1 Jno. 5. 6, 8. 5 1 Pe. 3. 21. <sup>c</sup> 1 Jno. 1. 1-3. <sup>d</sup> Ex. 12. 46. Nu. 9. 12. Ps. 34. 20.

were thus pierced, and we suppose they were not. This was instead of breaking the legs, and was to make sure of His death. The term means to *rend*—then to *pierce deeply*. As the soldiers would make sure of His death, so the Holy Spirit would assure us of the full proof of His death, that none may say that our Lord was not really dead at all, but only faint, and mistaken for dead—and that hence His resurrection was not supernatural. It is abundantly proved from medical testimony that He could not have lived after this *spear-wound*. From the position, it must have been on the *left side*. ¶ *Blood and water*. Some have judged this miraculous; but learned medical investigation has shown that this was the *lymph* of the pericardium or covering of the heart, or the watery blood of the pleura, which follows a mortal wound. See the treatise of C. F. F. Gruner, Halle, 1805. It is not said that this was a stream, as many imagine, but an oozing that issued from a mortal wound, and which is often secreted as a result of long-continued and intense agony. "It is one of the last phenomena of waning life." *Encyc. Metrop. Hydrop. Per.* The Evangelist speaks of it as most remarkable. The infliction of this death-wound was an important point of evidence for all time as to Christ's death and Resurrection. There were also those in this Apostle's time who held that Jesus was only an apparition, and had not a real body. This testimony may have been intended also for them.

35. John thus expressly calls atten-

tion to this testimony as that of an *eye witness*, and presses the truth. OBSERVE—Our faith weeps, yet triumphs, as it sees the death-blow fall upon our Substitute, for in this we see our release. The paschal lamb was pierced with two spits of pomegranate wood, running *crosswise*, and so was roasted. The term for this mode of roasting, in Arabic, is *to crucify*. *Jahn's Arch.* § 142.

37 And again another scripture <sup>e</sup> saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

38 And after this, Joseph of Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear <sup>f</sup> of the Jews) besought Pilate that he

<sup>e</sup> Ps. 22. 16. Zec. 12. 10. Re. 1. 7. <sup>f</sup> c. 9. 22; 12. 42.

tion to this testimony as that of an *eye witness*, and presses the truth. OBSERVE—Our faith weeps, yet triumphs, as it sees the death-blow fall upon our Substitute, for in this we see our release. The paschal lamb was pierced with two spits of pomegranate wood, running *crosswise*, and so was roasted. The term for this mode of roasting, in Arabic, is *to crucify*. *Jahn's Arch.* § 142.

36. *For*. This is a strong reason for believing, beyond the testimony of an eye-witness, viz:—the evident fulfillment of the type. ¶ *Broken*. This is a quotation from Exod. 12: 46, which was written of the paschal-lamb. The event here fulfilled that, as it was typical, and so far prophetic of this. So did the minute arrangements of the earliest Mosaic ordinances look forward through ages, to Christ.

37. *Pierced*. This passage is found in Zech. 12: 10. The *Septuagint* translators, not able to see how this could refer to God, took the sense to be "*whom they despised*." John, however, here intentionally quotes from the Hebrew, instead of from the translation in his own tongue, and the Holy Spirit through him here corrects the previous misapprehension, by giving the true sense, and pointing to the fulfillment in this event. In this term lay the fulfillment. The *piercing* was fulfilled; and though the looking on Him was then in part fulfilled, the greater accomplishment remains, when the believing Jews shall *look on Him* by faith, and the unbelieving (Rev. 1: 7.) with the conviction of the last day.

38. *Secretly*. Literally—*concealed*—

might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also <sup>a</sup> Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and <sup>b</sup> brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds *weight*.

<sup>a</sup> c. 3. 1, 2; 7. 50.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Ch. 16. 14.

*hid.* Mark (ch. 15: 43,) shows us a reason for the mention of this, viz: that the death of Christ gave him boldness—"he went in *boldly* unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus." So, also, was it with Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus *by night*. vs. 39.

39. *Myrrh*. This is not the usual term for myrrh, and it is thought to be a gum from a tree in Arabia. This mixture was probably not in a liquid state, but pulverized, as would appear from the weight, (100 pounds *troy*.) The body was wrapped in these spices, as there was not time to do more, and this would be sufficient until after the Sabbath, for they had no thought of His rising. The Jewish law was very rigorous in regard to the observance of the Sabbath. But we Christians may anoint Christ's body, and may serve the Church, (which is His body,) on the Sabbath day, and at all times. As to the very great quantity of spices brought, it was only the greater honor paid to the dead to bring an abundance, and according to their custom, great quantities were burnt to perfume the chamber, and especially to pay unusual respect.

40. See *Notes on Matt. and (figure,) Mark 15: 44.* For the mode of embalming, see *Notes, ch. 11: 44.* Mark expressly tells us that the linen used for the wrapping of our Lord, was *fine linen*. Ch. 15: 46. The coarse cloth was probably used to fold the spices upon the body, and an outer wrapper of finer material was folded over all. So the language of John implies, "Wound it (the body) *in linen cloths, with the spices.*"

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound <sup>a</sup> it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There <sup>a</sup> laid they Jesus there-

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 5. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Is. 53. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

41. John is more particular in this interesting statement than the other Evangelists. He tells us that the garden was in, or near to Calvary. Of course, therefore, it was well known, as being so immediately outside the city, and Jesus was not buried in a corner, to practice a cheat in regard to His resurrection. The Jews yet bury very near the city, and rows of grave-stones, flat upon the ground, may be seen along the slope and in the valley of Jehoshaphat. ¶ *A new sepulchre.* This is further stated, and it shows that there could have been no mistake about the same body having risen, which was laid in the grave—as no other had ever been laid there. See *Notes on Matt.* ¶ *To bury.* The term means to wrap in bandages with spices, and thus prepare the body for the tomb. It has been abundantly shown that the varieties in these four accounts of different Evangelists are only such as are natural, and such as strongly confirm the great facts to which they all testify. These different narratives could be most perfectly harmonized if we knew all the particulars. But in so brief and condensed a statement, where each is giving the narrative from his own point of view, and with his own particular object in reference to those for whom he immediately wrote, it would be strange if they did not so vary. They do not contradict. Yet often such short imperfect accounts will seem contradictory just for lack of the filling up, which would reconcile the whole. Skeptics would have said that they copied from each other, if all had given precisely the same ac-

fore, because \* of the Jews' preparation-day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

## CHAPTER XX.

¶ THE <sup>b</sup> first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre,

a ver. 31. b Matt. 28. 1, &c. Mar. 16. 1, &c. Lu. 24. 1, &c.

count. Yet they use the variations now to try and prove them contradictory. John makes no mention of the watch that was set at the Pharisees' request. The attempts they made to shut up the body in the sepulchre, were controlled by God to increase the miraculous evidences of the resurrection, which was to be preached as a fundamental doctrine. See Matt.



This figure gives a view of the building now standing over what is called the Holy Sepulchre. It is within the church of that name, and covers the supposed tomb of Joseph where Jesus lay. Thrupp, in his late work—"Ancient Jerusalem, its Topography," &c.—shows that the rocky knoll near to this site, rising suddenly some fourteen feet in height, answers well to the site of Calvary or Golgotha, and must have been a prominent feature familiar to the people, and was located some two hundred and fifty yards from the city wall. The sepulchre we found to be so stripped of any natural features, that we could form no clear idea of its original state. Indeed, it has become

and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom <sup>c</sup> Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

c c. 13. 23; 19. 26; 21. 7, 24.

a marble shrine of superstition instead of a sacred tomb. See Notes on Luke 23 : 33.

## PART IX.

*Our Lord's Resurrection, and His subsequent appearings, and His Ascension.*

Time, Forty Days.

## CHAPTER XX.

¶ 160. VISIT OF THE WOMEN TO THE SEPULCHRE. MARY MAGDALENE RETURNS.—Jerusalem.

First day of the week.

| Matt.   | Mark.     | Luke.     | John.     |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 28 : 1. | 16 : 2-4. | 24 : 1-3. | 20 : 1, 2 |

1. The first day. See Notes on Matt. 28 : 1. ¶ When it was yet dark. This clause of John expresses more exactly the fact noted by the other Evangelists—that it was *very early*. It was twilight—at the first glimmering of dawn. See explanation in Notes on Mark 16 : 1-4. Different groups of the women probably arrived at different moments at the Sepulchre, and Mary Magdalene, "last at the cross," would seem to have been first at the tomb. ¶ Rolled away. The other Evangelists notice this, but Matthew alone tells how it was done.

2. John alone gives us these facts, as to Mary's hastening back to Jerusalem, in her first surprise, to tell the anxious, doubting Peter and John of what she had seen, and of what she feared. The other Evangelists here give the vision of angels by the other women in the sepulchre. Mary hur-

3 Peter <sup>a</sup> therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun <sup>b</sup> Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes <sup>c</sup> lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie;

a Lu. 24. 12. b Lu. 13. 30. c c. 19. 40.

ried back to the sepulchre, meanwhile, and saw the angels, and was the first who saw *the Master*. Mark 16: 9. See the full explanation, Notes on Mark 16: 9. OBSERVE—That in John's narrative, his object is to give an account of Mary Magdalene, as the principal character. Hence he mentions her quite alone.

§ 163. PETER AND JOHN RUN TO THE SEPULCHRE.—*Jerusalem.*

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke.   | John.    |
|-------|-------|---------|----------|
|       |       | 24: 12. | 20. 3-10 |

3. *Peter*. Luke speaks only of Peter's going, but John here relates that he himself accompanied him, which makes his witness the more credible.

4, 5. *Did outrun*. Literally—*Ran before more quickly*. Showing probably that it was not with greater earnestness, but with greater speed. For the impulsive Peter rushed in, while John, either for reverence or for modesty, or for fear of pollution, did not at first enter. How lively and natural is this description. "What is not related is as full of truth as that which is."

6, 7. Alford remarks that "we seem to hear the very voice of Peter, describing to his companion the inner state of the tomb." This orderly arrangement of the clothes was enough to satisfy them that the grave had not been entered by thieves, for such rude handling would have left everything in confusion.

8. John was doubtless attracted to

7 And the napkin, <sup>d</sup> that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the <sup>e</sup> scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

¶ 11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping:

d c. 11. 41. e Ps. 16. 10. Ac. 2. 25-31; 13. 34, 35

the inside by Peter's animated account of what he beheld there. ¶ *Believed*. It is thus distinctly stated that the effect of all that John saw was to convince him of the fact that Christ had "risen as He said." This is the sense in which John uses the word believe. If he had meant only that he believed what Mary Magdalene said, the language would probably have been so restricted. He says nothing of Peter, and this is probably from delicacy, as we must infer from Luke's account of Peter's departure, that that Apostle's mind was not set at rest. Luke 24: 12. "He departed, *wondering in himself* at that which was come to pass."

9. This is thrown in here, to show the state of the case. John believed merely from the evidence of his senses, not from the clear understanding, or full force of the scripture. For as yet neither of them were moved by the sense of scripture to expect any such thing. Many passages of the Old Testament foretold His death and subsequent exaltation and glorification. Isa. 53. So Ps. 2: 7; compare Acts 13: 33. Ps. 16: 9, 10; compare Acts 2: 25-32.

§ 164. OUR LORD IS SEEN BY MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE.—*Jerusalem.*

| Matt. | Mark.     | Luke. | John.     |
|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|       | 16: 9-11. |       | 20: 11-18 |

11. This shows that Mary returned immediately after notifying Peter and



and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked <sup>a</sup> into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I

<sup>a</sup> Mar. 16. 5.

John. She was full of anxiety and grief, not expecting what joy was in store for her, or how near to her was the Master.

12. *Two angels.* Luke speaks of two angels, as seen by the women outside the sepulchre. Now they were within, and were seen by Mary as she looked into the chamber.

13. *Why weepest thou?* Comforting angels were these, gracious heralds of the Master and of His message, for they ask the same tender, sympathizing question which He puts to her the next moment. vs. 15. What wonder if the heavenly hosts were often visible on this great day, and in various circumstances were publishing this great fundamental truth of the new dispensation? "*He is risen as He said.*" ¶ *Because.* While the other women were terrified, Mary seems to have had no fear, so wholly was she taken up with her great desire of finding her Lord. She was ready to brave more heroically than ever all danger, if she might only find His corpse. She may have thought that some of the other disciples had removed the body from this sepulchre, where it was deposited hastily before the Sabbath. There seems at least to have been an understanding among them that the embalming, which had only been commenced, should be completed after the Sabbath.

14. *Knew not.* She did not expect any such thing as to find Him alive, and therefore she would not be likely to know Him, at the first. Or, as another suggests, "her tears wove a

know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and <sup>b</sup> saw Jesus standing, and knew not <sup>c</sup> that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir,

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 28. 9. Mar. 16. 9. <sup>c</sup> Lu. 24. 16, 31. c. 21. 4.

veil which concealed Him who stood before her."

15. *Why weepest thou?* How different are these words as spoken by Jesus from the same words spoken even by His angels. Friends often ask the same thing, in our moments of anguish. But they can give no relief, and no arguments of theirs can cure the inward wound. But our blessed Lord reveals Himself in words of grace that go to the heart's wound, and wonderfully heal. ¶ *Whom seekest thou.* Thus the adorable Saviour would draw her out to tell what she wants and whom she seeks for. So pleased is He to hear any poor sinner say, "*I seek Jesus.*" So ready is He at the moment to say, *I am He*—not as He said it to the band of Judas, to drive them backward to the ground—but in tones of infinite tenderness to draw them unto Him. So ready is He to show Himself, and to show that He has all that is sought for—all that the seeking soul can possibly want. ¶ *She supposeth.* Alas! how ready are we to mistake Him for another! to be infinitely lowering Him in our view—to think He is only some one like ourselves—some one having no more power than ourselves to give the needed peace, and bring the needed salvation. Jesus, mistaken for the gardener! But OBSERVE—It is Jesus, nevertheless. Yes! Mary, though you do Him such indignity and discredit as to take Him for a gardener, and His gracious words for those of a common day laborer, it is Jesus just as truly as though you now recognized Him. A gardener He is, indeed! and "THE

if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and  
 \* I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary.<sup>b</sup>

a Ca. 3. 2. b Is. 43. 1. c. 10. 3.

*gardener*," watching at earliest morning to expose this tender, delicate plant of His to the rising sun, and to prepare it for blooming in the paradise of God. ¶ *I will take Him.* Ah! this is what the Saviour wishes to hear from His grieving, desponding disciple. You will take Him away, will you? will carry in your arms that precious corpse which you have already handled at the cross and the burial! You will bear it joyously and triumphantly to some sacred retreat where it may be safe. This is enough, "Whosoever will, let him take." "Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord." How happy is the Saviour now, when you have so freely expressed your longing desires after Him, to reveal Himself at once—as the very one whom your soul loveth. Your beloved is near you, though you have thought Him afar off. Whoever sought and did not find? But oh! instead of finding Him a corpse, you shall find Him a risen, living, glorious Redeemer. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning!

16. *Mary.* He revealed Himself by showing His recognition of her? It is when we find that the Master knows us—recognizes us—calls us by name—shows His personal attention and sympathy, that we know Him, and are able to answer, "Master." So He revealed Himself to Zaccheus, by calling him out in the crowd, though posted up where he seemed to be quite out of the way of His notice. So the Saviour always shows to every seeking sinner, that He is out seeking him. Every inquirer, like Mary and Zaccheus, shall find himself more sought than seeking. Christ is seeking them more than they are seeking Him. Christ utters only one word! But what a power goes with it, when that word is her own name and shows how He knows her—cares for her—seeks

She turned ° herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch

c Ca. 3. 4.

her—rejoices in finding her, as much as she can rejoice at finding Him—owns her as His—and has a heart full of love for her—all uttering itself in her familiar name. ¶ *She turned herself.* However she had "*turned herself back*" before, (vs. 14.) now she turned more entirely. No turning of the soul is full and true, till Christ is heard calling—calling the very person *by name*. The Saviour's call of grace and salvation recognized in the gospel, is what we need to hear, in order to genuine "repentance unto life." We must have an "apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ," before we shall find encouragement to turn from sin unto God, with cheerful purposes of obedience. ¶ *Rabboni.* How true hearted is this. A whole world of emotion and of devotion in a word. This one word is a recognition of Christ, as what He claims to be—a Personal, Living, Risen Saviour—the accepted sacrifice—the triumphant Redeemer who has died for us—is risen for us—our Prophet and King as well as our Priest. This one word involves a profession of Christ and a profession of His discipleship, better than many empty formularies pronounced only with the lips. ¶ *Which is to say.* After all it shall be every thing to have the Spirit's interpretation of what we say in our profession. What does it really mean? Here the Evangelist gives us the Syro-Chaldaic word which she used, (as that language was then spoken,) interpreted into the Greek word, meaning *Teacher*. But when we see our words of profession interpreted from our common forms, into the true language of the heart, what will that language be?

"What a change His word can make  
 Turning darkness into day.  
 Ye who weep for Jesus' sake  
 He can drive your fears away."

17. *Touch me not.* It would seem that she at once, with the word Mas-

me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my <sup>a</sup>brethren, and say unto them, <sup>b</sup>I ascend unto my Father, and <sup>c</sup>your Father; and to my <sup>d</sup>God, and your <sup>e</sup>God.

18 Mary Magdalene came <sup>f</sup>and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

¶ 19 Then <sup>g</sup>the same

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 22. 22. Ro. 8. 29. He. 2. 11. <sup>b</sup> c. 16. 28. <sup>c</sup> Ro. 8. 14. 15. 2 Cor. 6. 18. Ga. 3. 26; 4. 6. 7. <sup>d</sup> Ep. 1. 17. <sup>e</sup> Ge. 17. 7. 8. Ps. 43. 4. 5; 48. 14. Is. 41. 10. Je. 31. 33. Eze. 36. 18. Zec. 13. 9. He. 11. 16. Re. 21. 3.

ter, threw her arms around Him—*“held Him by the feet and worshiped Him,”* as the other women did. See Matthew 28: 9. He saw that she thought now only of cleaving to Him, and not letting Him go—thinking no further than of having found her buried and lost Master, and of being admitted again to the enjoyment of His bodily presence, as before His death. He therefore reminds her of His work—bids her not to touch Him—not to think of a mere visible communion—not to detain Him by these demonstrations of affection—for He is to rise to Heaven, as He said—is to ascend to His Father—and that will be the opportunity for communion with Him in a higher sense, and in a way more adapted to the need of all His disciples, where all can at the same time embrace Him. Therefore she must not monopolize His attentions, but hasten and tell the brethren that He is going, as He said, for their sakes—to their Father's house, (ch. 15,) where they may lay hold of Him by faith, and all at the same moment. He can no longer be restricted to the mere bodily fellowship, and bodily touch, which is too narrow in its application, and suits not the need of the universal brotherhood of believers. ¶ *Go to my brethren.* “This was a far greater honor than that which was denied her.” The gracious Saviour denies us nothing but for our greater advantage. ¶ *Thy brethren.* “This shows that He has

day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then <sup>h</sup>were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. 28. 10. <sup>g</sup> Mar. 16. 14. Lu. 21. 36. 1 Cor. 15. 5. <sup>h</sup> c. 16. 22.

not put off His humanity, nor His love for His own, in His resurrection state.” See Heb. 2: 11. ¶ *I ascend.* Rather—*I am ascending*—am on my way thither after a sojourn of a few days. And she ought to rejoice. Ch. 15: 28. ¶ *My Father and your Father.* Here He would teach them that His Father is also theirs, as He had often said. Chs. 14-17. This is their union with Him, and their privilege through this union. In His Father's house He was going to prepare a place for them. But the Father was His by nature—theirs by grace. ¶ *My God.* Under whom also I am man. ¶ *Your God.* Among whom I also am Mediator.

18. *Came and told.* Mark says she told the disciples as they mourned and wept—and that they believed not. Matthew here adds the report of the watch. Mark and Luke relate His appearing to Peter, and to the two going to Emmaus.

§ 167. JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTLES, THOMAS BEING ABSENT.—*Jerusalem.*

Evening following the first day of the week.

|           |           |           |       |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Matt.     | Mark.     | Luke.     | John. |
| 16. 14-18 | 24. 34-49 | 20. 19-23 |       |

19 *The first day of the week.* All the Evangelists at the commencement of their narratives of the resurrection, mention that it was the first day of the week. John here repeats the notice of the time as being the evening of this day that had passed already

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace<sup>a</sup> be unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so<sup>b</sup> send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto

a c. 14: 27. b Matt. 28: 19. c. 17: 18. 2 Ti. 2: 2. He. 3: 1.

into general use as the Christian Sabbath, and which he in the Revelation calls "the Lord's day." John alone relates that this social meeting was with closed doors, on account of the persecuting Jews. The intimation is, that Jesus stood in the midst, notwithstanding the closed doors, or caused them to open before Him. This is His first appearing to "*the eleven*"—and it was within the day of His rising. He spake *peace* to them, and showed them the marks of His crucifixion, as the proof of His having really risen from the dead, (the same Jesus,) and this fact is to be the basis of their peace. ¶ *Glad*. So He had promised to them, (ch. 16: 20,) "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." If their Lord had died and risen, then that that was to them the deepest grief was rather a matter of triumph.

21. *Again*. His salutation and precious gospel-word "*Peace*," He repeats to us over and over, that we may rejoice in Him as the *overcomer*. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Ch. 16: 33. ¶ *As my Father*. See ch. 17: 18. "He thus installs them in the office to which He had previously appointed them. Let it be, therefore, held by us as an ascertained truth that the Apostles were now for the first time appointed to be ordinary ministers of the Gospel."—*Calvin*. We find no such language used by the Apostles in reference to their ordination of succeeding ministers. There was an extraordinary office as Apostles, but an ordinary work as teachers. That no final gifts of Apostleship were now formally conferred, is plain from the absence of Thomas, who, in that case, would be no Apostle, in the same sense as the rest. In the sense in which He here sends them forth, we find them going

them Receive<sup>c</sup> ye the Holy Ghost.

23 Whose soever<sup>d</sup> sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

c Ac. 2: 4, 38. d Matt. 16: 19; 18: 18.

forth, namely—as publishers of Christ. In this sense also, they had successors, and in this sense, He is to be with them always, even to the end of the world.

22. *Breathed on them*. The gift was thus signified as to come from the acting forth of His life, as applied to them. The *breath* was an expressive symbol of the Holy Spirit—more so for this purpose than the *wind*, as showing that it must come from His own living act, and from its direct application to them, as infusing a new and higher life. Gen. 2: 7. ¶ *Receive*. This was a symbol and earnest of the impartation at Pentecost, so soon to be experienced. Whatever was here conferred, was *Apostolic*, like the *commission* to teach all nations, but it was their mission from Christ the Bestower of the Spirit, for their office, and not a successive delegation and transmission from the Apostles. Christ's presence with them as Teachers, Rulers, &c., is that which gives them authority.

23. *Whose soever*. We learn the sense in which this power was understood, by observing the history of its exercise, as in case of Simon Magus, (Acts 8: 20, 23,) Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts 5: 3, 4, 9,) where sins were retained. So in the Corinthian church, (1 Cor. 5: 3-5,) we find Paul retaining, and in 2 Cor. 2: 6-10, remitting sin in this sense. This was a special authority granted to them of binding and loosing—a special power of the keys. Matt. 18: 18. Their retention and remission of sin was an infallible *declaration* of its being done by the authority vested in them by the Head of the Church. They could not themselves *forgive* sins, but God only. They had a special gift for the discernment of spirits which belonged to them as Apostles, and which none after them could claim. Acts 5: 3, 4. Accord-

¶ 24 But Thomas, \* one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore

a c. 11. 16.

ingly Timothy and Titus were charged to deal with sinners in the church, "reproving" and "turning away from" them, and "rebuking with all authority." 2 Tim. 4: 2; Titus 1: 13; 2: 15. Similar directions were given also to churches collectively. See Matt. 18: 17, where the discipline of the Church is distinctly referred to, as an authority of binding and loosing, remitting and retaining sin, in Christ's name, by solemn declaration of the Church, through their constituted rulers. These rulers are found in the New Testament, to be not only those elders who *rule and teach*, (ministers,) but those who *rule only*, (ruling elders,) 1 Tim. 5: 17—*governments*. 1 Cor. 12: 28. Such an authority lodged with the rulers of the Church, from Christ Himself is vested in fallible men, but is full of solemnity and of responsibility, and it is essential to the idea of government and order, that there should be a provision for discipline. See Titus 3: 10; 2 Thess. 3: 6. OBSERVE—*The keys of the kingdom*, which Jesus promised to Peter. (Matt. 16: 19.) He gave, not to Peter alone, but to all the Apostles, and to the Church after them. 2. "These terms are used that believers may be fully convinced that what they hear concerning forgiveness of sins is ratified, and may not less highly value the reconciliation which is offered by the voice of men, than if God Himself stretched out His hand from Heaven. Most absurdly do the Papists, on the other hand, torture this passage to support their magical absolutions."—*Calvin*.

§ 168. JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTLES, THOMAS BEING PRESENT.—*Jerusalem*.

|       |       |       |           |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
|       |       |       |           |
|       |       |       | 20. 24-29 |

This was the first Sabbath evening meeting for social worship which was

said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he <sup>b</sup> said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my

b Ps. 78. 11, 32.

held under the new Dispensation, and Thomas was absent when Jesus came. This absence was plainly enough owing to his unbelief—to the lack of a lively hope, and to a flagging zeal. And just by this one absence he missed the intense joy of Jesus' appearing to the circle—and he missed also the breathing of Jesus by which the Holy Spirit was bestowed and the spiritual authority in the church was given to the Apostolic group. OBSERVE—1. How much is often lost by absence from a single social meeting. 2. This is often excused on the ground of divers hindrances, but is commonly traceable to the want of a lively piety. 3. Such absentees often miss the Saviour's appearances, and His wonderful communications of the Holy Spirit. Sad, indeed, for any church member not to have been with them when Jesus came. Thomas had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, (ch. 11: 16,) but yet his faith staggered here.

25. The others would naturally seek out this absentee, and tell him what he had missed. They would preach to him from their own experience. The spiritual ought to restore one who is overtaken in a fault, and to do it in the spirit of meekness. They tell him in substance the simple fact, "We have seen the Lord." Amazing grace! This would be enough to say, though possibly they gave a full detail. They probably told him that He showed them His hands and His side, vs. 20. ¶ *Except I shall see*. This is Thomas; quite in keeping with his doubting, desponding character all along. He has been called "the Rationalist of the Apostles." He will believe only so far as he has sensible proof. Yet it was not the result of indifference, or of cold skepticism. It was only *too good news to be true!* Therefore, as we shall see, our Lord even grants him this extreme demand, knowing that he is sound at

finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. *Then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace <sup>a</sup> be unto you.

a Is. 26. 12.

heart, and that these are only the fond and jealous misgivings of ardent love. It was from the man who, in starting for the tomb of Lazarus, said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him," despairing of the life of his dear Jesus.

26. *After eight days.* This is the first record of the Christian Sabbath observance. They probably had met daily. But 1. The Holy Spirit records this as more than an ordinary day—"the eighth." 2. The meeting was hallowed by our Lord's appearing, giving it purposely a special sanctity, and making it worthy of record, as being the *second Sabbath* of the New Dispensation. 3. These meetings, which Jesus thus hallowed so especially, were both of them turned into celebrations of *His resurrection*, and this it is which makes our Christian Sabbath. "*The eighth day*," as the beginning of a new week, and a new period of time, was sacred under the Old Dispensation, as the day for circumcision. The morrow after the Sabbath or first day of un-leavened bread, was the day for the offering of the *first fruits*. See *Notes on Mark 16: 1.* ¶ *Thomas with them.* Could he ever be absent again? See ch. 21: 2. And does not his presence now show how much he grieved at his loss, notwithstanding all his darkness and doubt? ¶ *Peace.* Jesus, not upbraiding, strives to remove all doubting by this gracious word "*Peace*." Thus He answers to the *Shiloh* (Peace) of prophecy, and "THE PEACE" of Micah, (ch. 5: 5,) for He is *our Peace*. Ephes. 2: 14.

27. Without waiting for a word of

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, <sup>b</sup> and thrust *it* into my side: and be <sup>c</sup> not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My <sup>d</sup> Lord and my God.

b 1 Jno. 1. 1. c 1 Ti. 1. 14. d Ps. 118. 28. e 5. 23-1 Ti. 3. 16.

Thomas' doubt, and well knowing all his heart, He meets most fully his case, even to the exposing of His wounds to the experiment of Thomas. Jesus had rather that they be opened again, than have His dear, chosen Apostle continue in darkness. He suffers that our joy may be full. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold (make full and sensible experiment of) my hands, &c. The resurrection body was bloodless--and the wound in the side was gaping enough to admit his hand. This was only what our Lord knew that Thomas had demanded. And now when he is challenged at the first to do just what he had required to do before he would believe, how is he struck with the proof of Christ's identity, as much from His Omniscience as from His wounds. ¶ *Thrust.* Rather, *put*. ¶ *Be not faithless.* Rather, "Be not unbelieving, but believing." It was a believing spirit that Thomas lacked, and had very much lacked all along. Now that Jesus has put to him such personal proofs of His atonement, with all the comforts of His glorious resurrection, will he not henceforth be believing?

28. Thomas plainly enough was satisfied without making the gross experiment that he had spoken of. The Divine love had shamed him, overcome him, convinced him. The same heart of love that bore the nail wounds for him stood out before him more openly than the gaping side, and he was admitted to reach into the depths of the Divine tenderness toward him. He saw this crucified one as a PERSONAL SAVIOUR—as *his Risen Saviour*—and he

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed <sup>a</sup> are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

¶ 30 And <sup>b</sup> many other

a 1 Pe. 1. 18. b c. 21. 25.

cried out *embracingly*—"My Lord and my God." Socinians, in order to get rid of this passage as a proof of our Lord's divinity, would make this to be a mere exclamation of Thomas; and this would turn this noble testimony of the Apostle into a profane shout, such as we may hear along the streets. What a perversion of Scripture, and what a defamation of holy men is this! OBSERVE—This confession of Thomas is the highest testimony to the Godhead of Christ yet given, and shows that the former confessions—"Son of God"—were understood. Artists have painted Thomas as actually thrusting his hand into Jesus' side, but the record implies that he did no such thing. "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed," vs. 29. OBSERVE—This is the first place in the Gospel history where our Saviour, the Lord Jesus, is addressed as God. Thomas is said to have carried the Gospel with a noble self-sacrifice into India, and to have sealed his testimony with his blood.

29. Alas for those of our day who will not believe anything supernatural in the inspired Scriptures—will not even believe in Inspiration. *Blessed* of the Lord Jesus are they who have faith, without first demanding the sight—who have faith where, in the nature of the case, sight is not to be had. Blessed are the sheep of our remote day and land, who are not of that fold. *Blessed* are they who, where there are no persecutions, do nevertheless endure against severe temptations to a life of sense, and of the world—who do yet believe; and who all along can say, *each for himself*, "My Lord and my God." OBSERVE—Our Lord reflects upon the requirement of sight in order to faith, as being a low degree of faith—just as that faith that

signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But <sup>c</sup> these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and <sup>d</sup>

c Lu. 1. 4. d c. 3. 15, 16; 5. 24; 10. 10. 1 Pe. 1. 9.

must have miracles and signs before it could act, was unsatisfactory and not to be trusted. John here gives this practical, personal testimony to the Godhead of Jesus, as establishing the doctrine with which he started out in this Gospel narrative—and further, he sets forth the true kind of faith in Jesus Christ. OBSERVE—The Christian faith is grounded on facts amply attested—every way proved, against all kinds of doubt and unbelief. Through every variety of questioning has come every kind of confirmation, in all ages of the Church. It was the firm belief in a PERSON—whom they could see, know, handle and prove—that so nerved the early Christians to endure the stake for this religion.

#### § 172. THE ASCENSION.—*Bethany.*

|       |             |            |             |
|-------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Matt. | Mark.       | Luke.      | John.       |
|       | 16. 19, 20. | 24. 50-53. | 20. 30, 31. |

30. *Signs.* This term is commonly used to signify miracles, as "*signs*" of the Divine presence—and hence it does not refer here to other appearances of our Lord, some of which John indeed goes on to record. It seems to be a statement thrown in here as a kind of summing up, and to signify that this narrative is not to be taken as a complete account of THE FORTY DAYS' wonders, much less of our Lord's life. Acts 1: 3.

31. John here declares his object in giving such a specimen as he has furnished of our Lord's miracles, &c., as proofs of His Godhead. This great truth he set out to establish, and now at the close he sums up. The miracles are recorded for the same reason as that for which they were wrought—to prove the Messiahship and Godhead of the PERSONAL WORD, (ch. 1: 1,)

that, believing, ye might have life through his name.

## CHAPTER XXI.

¶ **A**FTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

and he implies that enough is written for this purpose, to show forth the glory of Jesus as worthy of all faith. ¶ *The Christ. The Messiah.* ¶ *The Son of God.* As declared by John, and as foretold by the prophets—as He who was announced in the 2d Psalm, “Thou art my Son.” “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son.” Heb. 1: 5. This Sonship was sung of by the inspired Psalmist, as the ground of dominion over the heathen and the uttermost ends of the earth, (Ps. 2: 12,) and as the basis of His claim to Divine worship and trust. “KISS THE SOX.” “Blessed are all they that put *their trust* in Him.” ¶ *And that believing.* Thus David and John respond to each other in their exaltation of the Eternal Son, as the object of our faith. David pronounces all believers in Him *blessed*. John declares that such, and such only, have *eternal life*, through His all-worthy name—by His perfect righteousness and His finished work, as He was “declared to be *the Son of God* with power by His *Resurrection from the dead*.” Romans 1: 4. See chap. 1: 4-12.

This chapter seems to bring this Gospel narrative to a close. Yet there is still another and significant chapter, as an appendix. Just as John’s history had more than one commencement, so it has more than one close. And just as the Master, after He had seemed to close His discourses at the table and rose to depart, had yet more, and the more precious, discourses yet to give, so here, the beloved disciple closes, yet continues.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and <sup>a</sup> Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* <sup>b</sup> of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship

a c. 1. 45.

b Matt. 4. 21.

## CHAPTER XXI.

¶ 169. THE APOSTLES GO AWAY INTO GALILEE—JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO SEVEN OF THEM AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.—*Galilee.*

|         |       |       |           |
|---------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Matt.   | Mark. | Luke. | John.     |
| 28. 16. |       |       | 21. 1-24. |

This chapter contains a most interesting and important interview of our Lord with His disciples, which is found here only.

1. *After these things*—at a subsequent time, and not immediately afterwards. John had already recorded two appearances. He here proceeds to give a third. The Apostles are here found to have left Jerusalem. Matt. 28: 16. Some of them had resumed their former trade of fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, where they were called to the Apostleship, and where a previous miracle of the fishes had been wrought for them by our Lord. Luke 5: 1-8. What wonderful events have occurred since first they knew the Master. They had now returned to Galilee in obedience to the command given by the angel to the women on the morning of the Resurrection, (Mark 16: 7,) and in accordance with His promise. Matt. 26: 32. ¶ *Showed Himself.* The term here used implies that He was in His appearance something wonderful. Mark 16: 12.

2. Peter, who once denied the Master, and Thomas, who so lately doubted Him, are first on the list. See Mark 16: 7. Nevermore will it be said of Thomas, that “he was not with them when Jesus came.” Ch. 20: 24. Nathanael is here spoken of as “of Cana in Gali-



immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew <sup>a</sup> not that it was Jesus.

a c. 20. 14.

lee," which connects this last miracle with "the beginning of miracles." Ch. 2. His birth-place is mentioned here only. John here calls himself and his brother James by their original designation as "the sons of Zebedee." ¶ *Two ether.* It has been supposed that these were Philip and Andrew, who are commonly named among the first five of the twelve. There were thus *seven* in all present on this occasion.

3. They had resumed their trade of fishing, probably as a means of livelihood during the interval that the Lord had appointed them, between the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. Christian ministers, even those of Apostolic labors, must often submit to conditions of poverty. "An illustrious example," says Bengel, "of working with one's own hands, without detriment to Apostolic dignity." Yet in their straits Jesus will often appear to them, and wonderfully replenish their store, and succeed their labors. ¶ *I go a fishing.* This is like Peter, who made himself a leader—oftenest forward and beforehand of the rest in speaking, promising and acting—a primacy this, that was quite his own, yet fitting him also to *lead the way as a fisher of men.* ¶ *We also.* How the determination and action of one in any work of the ministry may move a whole circle of brethren. ¶ *A ship.* Rather the ship, or *small fishing-boat.* vs 8. In the former miracle, recorded by Luke. (ch. 5,) there were *two* boats. ¶ *That night.* Aristotle mentions that the night was the time for fishing thereabouts at this season, as in many other countries. ¶ *Caught nothing.* This was just as on the former occasion, when probably they last fished together. This similarity in the circumstances would pre-

5 Then <sup>b</sup> Jesus saith unto them, <sup>c</sup> Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast <sup>e</sup> the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast

b Lu. 24. 41. c 1 or, *Sirs.* e Lu. 5. 4-7.

sently remind them that it was the same Lord and Saviour who appeared to them, and their past experiences of His grace would give them confidence for their present necessity. OBSERVE—As fishers of men they would toil all night, and without Christ they could do nothing. Ch. 15: 5.

4. *The morning*—After they had toiled sufficiently to be made most glad by His presence. So the morning cometh after the night, when Jesus shall appear to His toiling ministers, and by their great successes at His bidding, introduce the millennial morning. ¶ *Stood on the shore.* So at the eternal morning of the final Resurrection, when "the day breaks and the shadows flee away," He will stand on the shore, and welcome His faithful laborers, to draw from the depths of His infinite fullness, till there be no room to receive. ¶ *Knew not.* "Their eyes were holden." Luke 24: 16. His body was veiled in its resurrection dress—and they were to know Him now from the miracle rather than from His form—to be taught to walk by faith rather than by sight.

5. *Children.* Rather, *little children*, as 1 John 2: 18—or possibly "*sirs*"—a word that might be used equally by a stranger to inferiors, and by a master or teacher to his disciples. Chrysostom, whose native language was Greek, says that He addressed them just as one who wished to buy fish might have addressed them. ¶ *Meat.* Literally—*Something to eat.* The term was used chiefly to signify *fish*, in a country where fish was the staple article of food. The question, vs Tholuck remarks, implies a design on His part of taking a meal with His disciples. vs. 12. His questioning was commonly to call attention to the ac-

therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his fisher's coat unto him*,

tual necessity, and to draw out an expression of the destitute case. When the sinner has confessed his utter emptiness and helplessness, (nothing to show after toiling the whole season through,) *then* Jesus will show His power and grace. So, in the miracles of feeding the thousands. The season prescribed by nature for the fishing had now passed—the season which grace appoints has come.

6. *Cast the net.* Though Jesus was to work a glorious miracle, it was only to crown their exertions with success. As they could do nothing without Him, so also He would do nothing here without them. Christian ministers, as fishers of men, must follow his positive directions as to *when and where and how*, without first demanding the *why* and wherefore. ¶ *The right side.* They saw not *why* it should have been the *right* any rather than the *left* side. This showed His sovereign election, and His secret knowledge of results. "The power of the Lord, (says *Bengel*,) compelled the fishes thither." The *right side*, in the Scripture, is the side of *advantage*, (Zech. 3: 1,) of *power*, (Ps. 110: 1,) of *favor*, (Matt. 25: 33,) of *good news*, (Luke 1: 11.) ¶ *Ye shall find.* His promise is conditioned upon their action. But their act is only in the way of reception—throwing out the net, or "*letting it down for a draught.*" Luke 5. They would see that the finding must have resulted wholly from following His directions, as they had toiled all night, and had doubtless cast the same net on the same side of the ship in vain. ¶ *Able to draw.* Literally—They no longer prevailed to *draw it gently*, or with gentle efforts as usual, on account of the multitude of fishes. The term

(for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come

here used is not the same as in vs. 8, which means *to drag with violence*. Why can we not thus promptly follow the directions, and apply the promises when they are not at all less express, in the great work of the ministry?

7. Here the beloved disciple is the one to recognize the glorious Master from the miracle—which was a miracle of *Love*. Not like Peter who only doubtfully said, Lord, IF IT BE *Thou*—he most decidedly says, "IT IS THE LORD." Peter, however, is the one to *go forward*—except when cowardly he "*followed afar off*"—while John is the one to recognize the Master, and make Him known to Peter. Love does always make the sweetest discoveries of Christ. ZEAL plunges even into the Sea to reach (through fire and through water) the Master. ¶ *Girt his fisher's coat.* Strapped it round him with a belt. He had thrown off this outer garment for work, (so the term "*naked*" here means). He now put it on and fastened it round him with his girdle, as they were accustomed to do, when they wished to wear this flowing coat, without having it in the way. This was not necessarily his "*fisherman's coat*," which was a light garment, without arms, and reaching to the knee, and was also a hindrance in swimming. Yet he must wear his coat, "as counting it unseemly to appear without it in the presence of his Lord." "Let us put on the armor of light." "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

8. *A little ship.* Literally, *in the boat*, before spoken of, (vs. 3,)—*by means of the boat*. It was only about one hundred yards, or two hundred cubits, distance. Peter swam or waded, while they made use of the boat. They came to the shore, now

to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

*dragging violently* after them, so far as they could, this overloaded net.

9. *Come to land.*—Disembarked.

¶ *Fire of coals.* Why should we conceive any difficulty or inconsistency in our Lord's providing this, when He had just now provided them the full, overrunning net of fish at a word. And it was significant, as showing that He wrought not that miracle for any need of His, to supply His hunger, for He had already an independent meal all ready for their partaking. As fishers of men, too, He will not only give them souls for their hire, but He will bring them to the banquet of His love. He has always a store—a ready supply—waiting to be partaken. He gives not only somewhat for His people to prepare for their table, but He *spreadeth a table* before us in the presence of our enemies. "All things are now ready." We are not to live on our successes, nor on the fruits of our toil—but however abundantly we may have drawn with our net, we are at last to sit down at *His* table, not at *our own*. He who before, upon yonder mountain-side, had fed the thousands with bread, can surely furnish this bread as it is needed. OBSERVE—When they had at first thought that He wanted a meal from their fish, (vs. 5,) they find that He invites them all along to the meal of His own providing. So when the Samaritan woman thought that He wanted only water for His thirst, He shows that He wishes most of all to give her to drink of "*living water*." He will have them sup with Him. Rev. 3: 20.

10. *Bring.* Yet He will have them bring of what they had caught—now that they would be prepared to own it as having all been gotten by His mighty power and love. They had caught nothing by any tact or skill of their

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

own—but just when they had fully proved all their own strength, and found it weakness, they then at length *by faith cast out* their net, to *CATCH* what He should graciously *cast in*. They could not boast in these. Therefore bringing all that they had caught to the feet of Christ, He would have these added to the feast. 1 Thess. 2: 19. Thus it is that *His grace goes before*, and *our works follow*. Ch. 15: 5; Rev. 14: 13. "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works *do follow them*." Rest gets some of its sweet reward from the *labors* foregoing, since if there were no *labors* there could be no *rest*. Christian rest always implies labors. Christ's yoke of obedient, cordial service is to be taken upon us, and we shall find rest to our souls. Happy day! when Christ's ministers may bring to heaven of the multitudes whom they have caught by His grace, in the way of His directions, and may rejoice also in the fruit of their Christian labors, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

11. Peter is now forward to give himself to the work that required special enterprise. ¶ *Went up.* That is, into the boat which was now at the shore, with the net probably fastened to it. ¶ *Drew.* This is the term for *gentle drawing*, not the term for *dragging with violence*, as in vs. 8. They had not been able any longer to draw it in the usual easy way, (vs. 6,) but together they had *dragged it* along. vs. 8. ¶ *Great fishes.* Not *small* ones, else the miracle would have been less. These were all large. Every soul we take for the Master, in the Gospel net, is *great*—because it is *immortal*, and its *redemption* is far too *precious* to be accomplished by worlds of treasure. ¶ *An hundred, &c.* The number is filled

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus <sup>a</sup> then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

a Ac. 10, 41.

up, as well as the net. There could neither have been one more nor one less in the net than lay in the Divine purpose. So is it with the multitudes which we may catch as fishers of men. The "hundred and forty and four thousand" will all be brought safe to Heaven. Yet many a pastoral hand may be needed, to bring one soul to land—how much more to *bring all*.

¶ *Broken.* This seems to refer them to the former occasion by the striking contrast—for there the net was broken, (Luke 5: 6,)—*the church rent*—but here not, though the weight of the fishes would naturally have broken it.

12. *Come and dine.* Rather—*Come, breakfast.* It was to the morning meal that they were invited. This would also be significant. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." This was the symbol of that great festival in Heaven—His own feast—to which He would invite them, after the labors of the night are over—to come in and sup with Him, (Rev. 3: 20,) at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, (Rev. 19: 9,)—not these *seven alone* any more than those ancient *three*, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—but the perfect sacred number, all gathered into *one*.

¶ *Durst ask Him.* *Knowing*—from the miracle of Love—why had they need to ask? And yet they would fain have asked amongst so much that was wonderful. But was not His name to be called *Wonderful*? This was He of whom the prophets wrote—"the Mighty God," &c. Hence they sat at the meal in silence. The object of this miracle had been to teach them of what His power and grace could and would do, to give them notable successes in their ministerial work—and

14 This <sup>b</sup> is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith unto Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more <sup>c</sup> than these? He saith

b c. 20, 19, 26.

c Matt. 26, 33, 35.

of the blessed reward to which He would at last welcome them—even "to the joy of their Lord." He will now teach them that the great essential for their successful labor and their heavenly rest is LOVE TO CHRIST as a Personal Helper, Deliverer and Saviour. Peter, by the way, is also to be solemnly re-installed in his office-work after his denial of the Master.

13. *Cometh, &c.* He thus proves His resurrection, as He probably eats also. Jesus dispenses all the provisions of the feast. He sups with them and they with Him. So will it be even in Heaven. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them." Rev. 7: 17.

14. *The third time.* His third special appearing to the *disciples in groups*.

15. *When they had dined.* He first shows His own love—feeds us, feasts us at His table, and *then* asks for our love. Rising from the sacramental supper, when we have been banqueted by Him on the provisions of His grace, He asks us individually, *Lovest thou Me?* To Peter, however, all this had the deepest significance. He calls him by his original name, Simon, son of Jonas, not by his new name, "*Peter*." So Luke 22: 31, when he appears as no longer a *rock*. How this change of address, went like a dagger to his heart. How the change from a familiar and fond name, to a formal, cold address, cuts to the quick among friends. ¶ *Lovest thou me.* This is not the same term in the Greek as that which Peter uses in his reply, though they are translated alike. Our Lord here asks, "*Dost thou love me?*" using the cooler term that expresses natural affection. Peter replies with

unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed <sup>a</sup> my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest

<sup>a</sup> Is. 40. 11. Je. 3. 15. Eze. 34. 2-10. Ac. 20. 28. 1 Pe. 5. 2, 4.

the stronger term, expressing warm personal friendship, "*Thou knowest that I love Thee dearly.*" Jesus repeats His own sober question. Peter replies in his own warmer term, which he feels will alone express all that is in his heart. "I love *Thee dearly* as a personal friend." But "the third time" Jesus uses Peter's word in asking the question. "Lovest thou Me dearly," as you protest? Peter was grieved because he put to him this questioning "the third time," reminding him so keenly of his thrice denying his Lord, and also, because at this third time of the inquiry He takes the very word from his mouth and puts it into the question, as though it could fairly be doubted, and thus more keenly still reminding him of the denial.

¶ *More than these.* More than these other disciples love me. This was what Peter had vainly boasted. Matt. 26: 33. Peter, in his reply, speaks not for the rest—does not say, "*I love Thee more than these*"—but only protests his own love as being deep, special, personal. And for this he honestly appeals to the Divine Omniscience.

¶ *Feed my lambs.* Our Lord also uses different terms in this context which are alike translated *feed*. This properly enough means *feed*, in the sense of nourishing, furnishing with food. That in the next verse means to *tend*—to act the part of a shepherd towards them. The term for *lambs* is not necessarily used to designate a distinct class of the flock, but is rather a tender name by which the Great Shepherd calls all His own dear ones. Yet it may fairly be regarded as pointing to the *children* of the church, or the "*babes in Christ*," who require most careful feeding "with

that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. <sup>b</sup>

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved <sup>c</sup> because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? and

He. 13. 20. 1 Pe. 2. 25. c La. 3. 33.

milk and not with meat." Heb. 5: 13, 14; 1 Pet. 2: 2. The Great Apostle to the Gentiles had a care for the children. 1 Cor. 7: 14; Ephes. 6: 1. Peter exhorts all believers to have the temper of *new-born babes*, for an habitual feeding upon the word. He would have all the flock to be *lamb-like*, and he exhorts His *fellow-elders* to feed the flock of God, as he himself is here charged to do. The test of ministerial love to Christ is a faithful care of the flock. This He had already shown in chap. 10.

16. *Feed my sheep.* Rather—*Shepherd my sheep.* Act toward them the part of a shepherd. Thus it was so repeatedly charged upon Peter that the proper proof of his love—his personal love to Christ—would be fidelity in his office as *under-shepherd*. To find in this passage anything which can be fairly understood as setting Peter at the head of the Church, as Pope, is absurd! "There was an entire equality in all powers and rights, (not excluding the pastoral,) of the whole Apostolic College." See Acts 15: 6-21; Gal. 1: 1; 2: 6-9, 11-14; 2 Cor. 11: 5; 12: 11, 12; Matt. 19: 28.

17. The Divine Speaker seems to say that in a Pastor, the first, second and third requisite, is LOVE TO CHRIST. Our Lord still addresses him the third time by his natural original name, to remind him of what he was by nature, and of what "flesh and blood" could be to him. ¶ *Was grieved.* Not only because it was the third time, with reference to His thrice denying Him after his most earnest professions, but because on this third occasion He changed the term, and used that which Peter had all along used, and different from

he said unto him, Lord, thou<sup>a</sup> knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee,<sup>b</sup> when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch

a c. 16. 39. b c. 13. 36. Ac. 12. 3, 4.

that of the question. See vs. 15. For it was as much as to say, "Do you indeed, as you thrice have declared, *love me dearly?*" and so it cast some reflection upon his past folly and fall. ¶ *Thou knowest all things.* Here Peter most feelingly appeals to the Divine Omniscience of his Lord. It is not boastfully, but humbly, as much as to say—Thou canst see into the secrets of my inmost soul, and where my fellow men might not see it, and where my inconsistencies would often cast a shade upon it, thou canst detect the love, however concealed. OBSERVE—The Divine Omniscience ought not to be a terror to the true Christian, but a comfort: for His all-searching eye, can trace His own likeness wherever it is to be found, in the deepest depths of the soul. ¶ *Feed my sheep.* The term here used is not "*shepherd*," as in vs. 16, but *feed*, as vs. 15. Trench remarks that the Master directs the "*shepherding*," with attention to the government and order of the flock, but that first and last, (vs. 15 and here,) He commands the FEEDING of the flock, as the most momentous and essential matter. The pastoral care lies not mainly in the form and outward pale, but in *feeding* the flock with truth and consolation.

18. The end of his pastoral office is here announced to him, as a proof of the Omniscience to which he had just appealed, as a contrast with the denials just referred to, and as a thrice noble proof which Peter was to give of the truth and sincerity of his love, as now he had thrice professed. He refers to this prophetic forewarning in his Epis-

forth thy hands, and another shall<sup>c</sup> gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death<sup>d</sup> he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow<sup>e</sup> me.

20 Then Peter, turning about,

e Ac. 21. 11. d 2 Pe. 1. 14. e Nu. 14. 24. 1 Sa. 12. 20. Matt. 19. 28. c. 12. 26.

tle. 2 Pet. 1: 14. ¶ *Girdedst thyself.* All along in your youth and prime, up to this hour, thou hast girded thyself, just as so lately with the fisher's coat, (vs. 7,) prompt, resolute and going whither thou wouldest. This was his past and present independence of action, nobly consecrated of late to the Master's service. ¶ *But when.* In his declining years he should meet with a different treatment. ¶ *Stretch forth* The tradition that Peter was crucified has given to this term the sense of stretching forth the hands for crucifixion. It probably, however, refers originally to the outstretching of a prisoner's hands to be bound for execution. Acts 22: 25. ¶ *Another.* He should fall into the hands of others, and violence should be done to him, as when they gird the condemned with ropes to drag them to crucifixion, or gird them to the cross with cords. See Acts 21: 11; Acts 22: 25. ¶ *Wouldest not.* Not that he would be unwilling to suffer violent death for the Master, but that he should die at the hand of persecution. See next verse.

19. *Signifying* :—*Indicating*—*pointing out*—by what (kind or manner of,) death he should (attest the truth of the gospel,) glorify God. ¶ *Follow me.* Peter had asked, "Whither goest thou?" and the answer of Jesus was, "*Thou shalt follow me afterwards.*" Now comes the summons to go forth to his work, ready to brave persecution and death. He had made this same call upon him on the same shore, (Matt. 16: 24,) and now most emphatically in the light of this new disclosure. As Jesus had just passed through death by

seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following, which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter, seeing him, saith to

bloody violence, so Peter is summoned to follow Him.

20. It would seem that our Lord moved on, and Peter commencing to follow, turned about to look after the rest, and saw John following—John, who was so pre-eminent among the twelve, having the true spiritual *primacy* of LOVE—whom Jesus loved—who also leaned on Jesus' breast, as his bosom friend and right-hand guest, and who asked the delicate question at the Supper, as it was suggested by Peter. Peter naturally enough asks about him. He was also the bosom friend of Peter. *See Introduction.* And his following here showed his love to both.

21, 22. *What shall this man do?* Literally—*And this one—what?* Peter had already understood that he was called to follow Christ to trial, though at the trial of Christ he had “followed Him *afar off*.” Matt. 26: 58. And now, thinking of all that so distinguished John as the beloved, and honored, and trusted disciple, he asks, with a curiosity not altogether pure, nor merely *idle*—as it was mixed with a concern for his friend and what should befall him—whether a similar call would be made upon him, and whether a similar death would be his. ¶ *If I will.* Our Lord well understanding the temper of Peter, does not reply directly to his question, but refers Peter to His own sovereignty in the matter—one taken and the other left, as He pleases. John had already received a prophetic forewarning of his death, when our Lord replied to the application for His right and left hand places in the kingdom, “Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with my baptism.” Matt. 20: 23; Mark 10: 39. ¶ *That he tarry—remain in the flesh.* The intimation

Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, <sup>a</sup> what *is that* to thee? Follow <sup>b</sup> thou me.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 25. 31. Re. 1. 7; 22. 20.    <sup>b</sup> ver. 19.

was that “John was to wait patiently, to linger on year after year in loneliness and weariness of spirit, to abide persecution, oppression and wrong, (Rev. 1: 9,) to endure the enmity of the wicked, (1 John 3: 13,) and the sight of heresies abounding in the church, (1 John 2: 18, 19–23,) as if to exemplify in Himself all classes of the faithful, and the various modes of drinking the cup of Christ.” ¶ *Till I come.* Our Lord had spoken of His coming to them, (ch. 19: 18,) and in His use of the term it includes all His comings, by the Spirit and by His judgments, onward to the consummation. It is generally referred here to that notable coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, which John alone lived to see, and which was the opening of that series of events that looked forward to the final coming to judgment, as in Matt. 25. ¶ *What is that to thee?* It is not speculation, but self-consecration, that is needed. It is not another's matters, but your own. May not Peter here have learned the lesson which he charges home in his Epistles, not to be “*a busy-body in other men's matters,*” and that other lesson, “If any man *suffer as a Christian—a follower of Christ*—(the only instance in which the name is used by the New Testament writers,) *let him not be ashamed,* but let him glorify God on this behalf.” ¶ *Follow thou me.* Thou, (emphatic.) “For every one of us must give account of himself to God.” “They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” 2 Cor. 10: 12. Each *must do his own duty*, which is not another's, and whether another shall do his own duty or not. Each is to do his own present duty, no matter what becomes of others, or of himself.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

Christian liberality is cramped with many by the constant asking of this question, "What shall this man do?" when the question should be, "What shall I do?" "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

23. *Should not die*—*Is not going to die*. So some inferred, who supposed that Christ's *final coming* was meant; and in the Thessalonian Church, many had misunderstood Paul's language, just as some here misinterpreted our Lord's. They reasoned of course that if Christ's *coming* meant His final coming to judgment—and if John were to remain until that time, he would not see death. 1 Thess. 4: 17. But if the prevalent belief in the church was that Christ's final coming should occur within a life-time, they could not have drawn the inference from these words, that *John should not die*. And if they inferred only that he was to be miraculously retained in life till some remote future beyond the longest life-time, why not as well for two thousand years as for two hundred? ¶ *Said not*. "To the law and to the testimony." Give us the "thus saith the Lord." What *did* the Lord say, and what did He not say? Our last appeal in all religious controversy is, and must be, to the Scripture. The original word is acknowledged as the last appeal for the settlement of all disputed points among all Evangelical Christians. Let us fall back upon God's word—study its precise terms—and bring out its very language more and more to the public understanding. And thus will many an error be stripped of its disguises, many a perversion of God's word will be exposed, and by the sure word of revelation, applied by the Spirit of all truth, the church shall

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and <sup>a</sup> we know that his testimony is true.

¶ 25 And <sup>b</sup> there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be

a c. 19. 35. 3 Jno. 12. b c. 20. 30.

"grow up in all things into Him who is the Head."

24. *This is the disciple*. As much as to say—The writer of this Gospel narrative is the disciple referred to—the beloved disciple—who yet lives indeed by the Divine favor, sixty or seventy years after the events. And he has nothing more to say, except to speak for others as well as for himself as to the certain truth of this testimony. WE KNOW, he says, just as in ch. 3: 11; 19: 35; 1 John 5: 18, 19, 20; 3 John 12. John still to the last speaks of himself in the third person.

#### § 173. CONCLUSION OF JOHN'S GOSPEL NARRATIVE.

| Matt. | Mark. | Luke. | John.   |
|-------|-------|-------|---------|
|       |       |       | 21. 25. |

25. He seems here, at the close of his testimony, to think how far short it must of needs fall of being a complete record. Already, in ch. 20: 30, he had declared that many other signs were wrought by our Lord which are not written in this book. And here he adds that if these numberless works and words of Him "who went about doing good" should be written out, every one of them, he does not suppose that there would be *room to contain* the records—as we say—or as the proverbial language has it that the world itself would contain them. So, in ch. 12: 19, the same proverbial hyperbole was used, and was perfectly well understood. "*The world is gone after Him*." OBSERVE—These four gospel narratives seem each to have had a specific aim, which naturally would control the selections from our Lord's words and works, under the suggestion of the Holy Spirit. As



written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the <sup>a</sup> books that should be written. Amen.

*a* Am. 7. 10.

we have seen, John had it for his object to record the proof of our Lord's Divine Person and Mission; and here, at the last, he testifies to the immensity of His doings. OBSERVE—We have so *many books* in order that we may have a variety of independent testimonies—we have so many *writers* that we may have the excellent harmony of their

statements, as given from every point of view. We have *so few details recorded*, lest the memory should be overburdened, and lest the Word of God, which is the Book of Life—the charter of salvation—should be unwieldy, and be confined to a few, or to a class, instead of being accessible and intelligible to **ALL**.

# APPENDIX.

[SEE PAGE 84.]

## CHAPTER IV. 39-42.

This paragraph, which records *the extension of the Gospel to the Samaritans*, by the ministry of our Lord, has an important connection with the progress of Christianity, under the Apostles, and its extension to the Gentile world, as recorded in the Acts. Though here was a rival religion, full of bitterness towards Judaism and its worship—though here was a mongrel people, full of hatred towards the Jews as a nation, our Lord had come on earth to be “the Saviour of the world,” and here was the “well of Jacob” to whom the angel of the covenant, in the vision of the ladder, had promised, “Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. 28: 14. The twelve were expressly charged to turn aside from this people, and to “go RATHER to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Matt. 10: 5. But the Good Shepherd had other sheep which were not of this fold—them also He must bring, and they should hear His voice, and there should be one flock and one Shepherd. Ch. 10: 16, *Notes*. Therefore, though these Samaritans afterwards refused Him and His disciples the common hospitalities of their country, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem—and though this very John then asked if he should call down fire from heaven upon them, as *Elias did*, (Luke 9: 51-55,) the blessed Saviour rebuked him and said, “The Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And John himself was afterwards, in his Apostolic ministry, called to go down to Samaria, and to pray rather for the *baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire* to descend upon them. Acts 8: 15.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying <sup>a</sup> of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were

a ver. 29.

## CHAPTER IV.

39. It is noted most expressly to the credit of the Samaritans that they believed upon the simple report of the woman, while the Jews, amidst His miracles, demanded a sign from Heaven. Ch. 2: 18. These Samaritans of the city believed even before they had seen Him. “Wonderful facility,” says Bengel. Compare ch. 5: 40 and vs. 48.

40. The people proved their earnest interest and confidence by beseeching Him to remain with them. So He did

come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

for a season. He loves to stay where He is wanted. This Sychar, now called Nablous, is one of the most thrifty and prosperous towns in Palestine, in the midst of a well-watered region, beautifully located between Gerizim and Ebal, with the Mount of Blessing evidently the most overshadowing it, and drawing to this day perhaps blessings from the well which Jesus opened then and there.

41, 42. *His own word*. The woman published the news with much success: but Christ with more. “Come and see” is always Christ’s invitation. And

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for <sup>a</sup> we have heard

<sup>a</sup> c. 17. 8. 1 John 4. 14.

ever since Jesus uttered these significant words to those first inquirers, Andrew and John, (ch. 1: 39.) His disciples have used them to others. Philip said "Come and see," (ch. 1: 46,) and the Samaritan woman said "Come and see," vs. 29. And they who responded to the call, found that the half had not been told them. "Let him that heareth say come." Rev. 22: 19. OBSERVE—1. How their faith, built upon direct personal contact with Christ, fully confirmed her testimony, even while it seemed to set it aside! 2. When we have had this personal communion with Christ, we can say we have heard him ourselves, and know that *this is indeed*—as the preacher or teacher declares—THE CHRIST. 3. This is the people about whom Christ had charged the twelve Apostles, in their first temporary commission—"Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." They were counted as next to the heathen. How blessed this visit of our Lord Himself to them now. This is now the beginning of the fulfillment of those large promises made to the patriarch. This is the first gathering in of the aliens into the fold of Christ. Here, where Israel owned the first portion of ground possessed by the patriarchs in the Holy Land, (except for sepulchres,) where he dug his well and opened a water-spring for the thirsty, Jesus now drinks, and the New Testament Joseph appears as the "*Fountain opened*," (of Zechariah,) and as the "fruitful bough—even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." OBSERVE—How large the terms of their confession—"THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD"—not of the

him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Jews only, nor of the Samaritans alone, but of the world. They had not read in vain their books of Moses—that "all nations of the earth," and "all families," were to be blessed in the promised seed. And the *Prophet like unto Moses* had come. We Gentiles ought surely to speak of Christ as *the Saviour of the world*, and to publish His Gospel to all nations.

The Samaritans, as a mixed people—partly of foreign extraction—were at special enmity with the Jews since the time of the building of the Temple by Zerubbabel, which they had seriously interrupted. And though our Lord had instructed the twelve, "Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not," (Matt. 10: 5,) yet He himself comes hither to sow the seed which should afterwards yield so plentifully to the reaping of His Apostles. On the eve of His Ascension, He declared to them that next to Jerusalem and all Judea, they should be witnesses to His name IN SAMARIA, and after that "into the uttermost parts of the earth." Acts 1: 8. Samaria, in Apostolic times, stood thus as a connecting link between Jews and Gentiles. Accordingly, this was the very path which Christianity actually took. When it was ready to overflow the ancient banks, after Stephen's persecution, Philip preached first at Samaria, and "they received the word of God," (Acts 8: 14,) and through Peter and this very John, the Holy Ghost was imparted to them, till at length the Gospel passed quite over to the Gentiles, and while the Priest and Levite turn aside, "the Good Samaritan" draws nigh. Luke 10: 33.

## OUTLINE OF EVENTS IN PALESTINE, &c.

PRIOR TO THE ADVENT OF OUR LORD, AND AFTERWARD, UNTIL  
THE DEATH OF JOHN.

---

Before Christ.

167. The Maccabean wars commenced under Mattathias.
166. The Maccabean princes and rise of the Asmonean power.  
 ("The Asmonean family descended from Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabeus, a priest of the course of Joarib, united in their own persons the civil and ecclesiastical authority.")—*Hale*.
165. "*The daily sacrifices*," which were discontinued B. C. 168, are now resumed; thus fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel (12: 7).
163. The Asmonean dynasty.—*Hale*. Judas is appointed governor of Judea.
160. First treaty of alliance with Rome. Embassy to Rome—the Jews are admitted as friends and allies.
143. The Jewish nation declared independent. Simon rules both as prince and priest—fortifies Jerusalem and Judea.
141. John (Hyrcanus) general of the forces.
136. Hyrcanus, attacked by Ptolemy, takes refuge in Jerusalem, and rules as priest and king. (The rise of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes traced by some historians to this reign.)
133. End of the Apocryphal writings.
130. Hyrcanus independent of Syria. He destroys the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, and brings Samaria under his rule.
125. Prosperous wars of John Hyrcanus. Dissensions of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
109. Prosperous period of Judea.
106. Death of John Hyrcanus. His son Aristobulus becomes priest and king.
105. Alexander Jannæus, his third son, succeeds as king.
103. Cleopatra of Egypt assists the Jews.
95. Insurrection of the Pharisees, 6,000 Jews massacred by the hired troops.
89. Civil war. The Pharisees receive aid from Syria. 6,000 Jews revolt from the Syrians, and join Jannæus.
85. Suppression of the Pharisaic revolt—50,000 rebels having perished in the war.
69. Hyrcanus, High Priest, declared king. Aristobulus II. claims the throne—defeats Hyrcanus, who then resigns.
66. Antipater, an Idumean, instigates Hyrcanus to struggle for the crown.
65. Civil war. Aretas, an Arabian prince, assists Hyrcanus, and shuts up Aristobulus in the Temple.
64. Roman interference. Aretas withdraws from Jerusalem—on his way home is defeated by Aristobulus with great slaughter.

ROMAN DOMINATION

Before Christ.

64. The claimants for the crown plead their cause before Pompey, the Roman general, at Damascus. Aristobulus, fearing the result, hastens back to Jerusalem, and prepares it for a siege.
63. Pompey is admitted into Jerusalem by the party of Hyrcanus. The Temple is taken—12,000 having perished. Aristobulus is sent prisoner to Rome. *Pompey profanes the Temple. He enters the Holy of Holies*, (being the first man, except the High Priests, who had ever dared to do so.)
61. Pompey's two triumphs as the conqueror of 15 kingdoms and 400 cities Sep. 23.

JUDEA IS MADE TRIBUTARY TO ROME.

60. The First Triumvirate at Rome (*Cæsar, Pompey and Crassus, Triumvirs*).
57. Five supreme independent Sanhedrims established. ("The corruption of public morals was at this time at a fearful height.")
54. Crassus plunders the Temple of two millions pounds sterling—10,000 talents.
47. Antipater made procurator of Judea under Hyrcanus, prince and high priest. Phasaël his son is governor of Jerusalem, Herod his second son governor of Galilee, who frees Galilee from robbers—is summoned before the Sanhedrim.
46. Herod obtains the rule of Cœle Syria.
40. Herod applies at Rome, and is appointed King of Judea by the Roman Triumvirate—he returns with the title of "King of the Jews."
39. Contests between Herod and Antigonus.
38. Jerusalem besieged by Herod and the Romans.
37. Jerusalem taken by storm—awful massacre of the inhabitants. Antigonus put to death as a common malefactor—thus terminating the Asmonean dynasty, after a term of 126 to 129 years.

IDUMEAN KINGS UNDER ROME.

- Herod ascends the throne of Judea. The Asmonean family and the Sanhedrim, except two, destroyed.
30. Herod submits to Octavius, and is re-appointed king. His dominions include Samaria, Galilee, Petrea, Iturea, Trachonitis and Idumea, besides Judea.
  28. Census of the Roman Commonwealth, 16,500,000 F. C. 17,258,761—Census of Rome 4,164,000.
  27. (*Rome ceases to be a Republic.* The title "*Augustus*" conferred upon Cæsar Octavius.)

THE EMPIRE OF ROME.

- (Revenue of the State, 40,000,000 sterling. The Pantheon built.)
19. Herod commences preparations for rebuilding the Temple.
  17. Rebuilding of the Temple commenced. (From this year to the first Pass-over of our Lord's ministry, *forty-six years*. John 2: 20.)
  9. The Alexandrian Jews confirmed in their privileges by the emperor, Augustus Cæsar.
  8. Herod visits Rome—loses the favor of Cæsar—obtains permission to kill his two sons by Mariamne.
  7. Judea virtually reduced to a Roman province. Herod a nominal king from this time.

## Before Christ.

- 4.—(That is, four years before the Common Era, called “Anno Domini.”)  
BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD AT BETHLEHEM.  
Riot in Jerusalem. The Roman eagle over the temple thrown down.
3. *Herod dies.* By his will he appoints Archelaus, King of Judea, Samaria and Idumea—Philip, Tetrarch of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis and Batanea—and Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. *See Notes on Matt. 2: 22.*
2. Archelaus proceeds to Rome, where he is accused of despotism and cruelty. (A. D. 6.) Caesar entitles him *Ethnarch* of Judea. He is banished to Vienne A. D. 6.

## THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

This was first used as a notation of time about the year 527, by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman Abbot. It was intended to form a reckoning from the Incarnation of our Lord. But chronologists have found that it was set four years too late. Yet it is so generally received that the error is not often regarded—and the year A. D. passes as the *Common or Vulgar Christian Era*, though for exact calculation it is important to note and allow for the difference. Blunders often occur on account of this inaccuracy. For example, our Lord's ministry, which commenced when He was 30 years of age, is to be set at A. D. 26—and His crucifixion, which was at 33 years of age, was at A. D. 29.—30.

## A. D.

## 6. JUDEA UNDER ROMAN PROCURATORS.

8. Jesus goes at twelve years of age to Jerusalem, and remains behind at the Temple.
14. Tiberius sole Emperor.
19. Expulsion of the Jews from Rome.
25. Pontius Pilate succeeds Gratus in the Pro-consulship of Judea. His tyranny excites disaffection.
26. John the Baptist's ministry commences. He baptizes Jesus. Our Lord's ministry begins six months after John's commences.
30. Crucifixion of our Lord, at 33 years of age.

## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDED IN JERUSALEM.

*Tiberius* sole Emperor—(A. D. 14–37.) *Caiaphas* High Priest. *Pilate* Governor.

37. *Caligula* Emperor. Stephen the first martyr. The Gospel in Samaria. Conversion of Cornelius. First Gentile church at Antioch. Conversion of Saul.
41. *Claudius* Emperor. He appoints Agrippa king over Herod's dominions.
42. *Herod Agrippa* King of Judea.
44. Martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee, and brother of John.  
*Death of Herod.*
50. *Synod* at Jerusalem.
54. *Nero* Emperor.
60. Paul's voyage as prisoner to Rome. His Martyrdom, (63 or 68.)
64. Burning of Rome. Nero's persecution of the Christians.
70. Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.
- 70–95. John labors in Asia Minor, (Ephesus, &c.) His Gospel-History and Epistles.
95. John's exile at Patmos, under Domitian. The Apocalypse.
96. Return to Ephesus.
- 100–102. John's death.



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